

As I have reached the 80th year of my life, I have decided to write the autobiography of my life, which has been full of many moments of achievements along with failures and heartaches. As I look back on my life I have been blessed with four children, one stepchild, sixteen grand-children, and three great-grandchildren.

I was born in a little square white house on south Main Street, March 5, 1895, in Vermont, Illinois. The first thing that I remember I was about 5 years old and we lived about one block east of the Kirkbride Hotel which was on Main Street. My sister had smallpox and my Father had to live at the Hotel as our house was quarantined. I remember him coming by once a day and talking to us through the window.

My Father's name was Charles William CRAFT the eldest of six children of William Edward CRAFT and Mary Jane (MERCER) CRAFT. He was principally a farmer and dealt in buggies and surries. At one time he owned a restaurant, a livery stable, a furniture store, and a mortuary. He was a very ambitious man, a hard worker, and a good trader and was successful at whatever he put his mind to. We always lived in town. He had about 1200 acres of land in and near Vermont. We had a horse and a pony that we drove everyday to the farms. In the evening he sold and traded buggies to the farm boys. He raised lots of cattle, horses, and hogs, fed out the cattle and hogs, broke the horses to work and sold them to horse buyers and other farmers. He bought a store building in town, remolded it, established a furniture store along with his brother Ray who was a cigar manufacturer and they also became funeral directors.

Mother's name was Laura Bell (MILLER) CRAFT. She was a beautiful, intelligent woman, and a helpmate if there ever was one. A very proud woman who loved her family and always wanted them around her. My only sister's name was Madelene Sarah CRAFT and she was born in Vermont, June 16, 1893. She was rather a tall girl with auburn hair. She married Charles MARKS whose father ran a Dry Goods store in Galesburg, Ill. They had two sons, Charles Craft MARKS and Robert MARKS. Charles Craft MARKS had two sons, Stephen and Douglas MARKS. Robert had a boy and a girl, Barbara and David MARKS. Robert died in 1951 with Infantile Paralysis and his wife Doris, who was English, took their two children and returned to England. Madeline died in 1952. My only brother Charles Edwin CRAFT was born in Vermont. He married Eunice John and to them was born one boy George, and two girls Judy and Jackie. He died in 1962. Grandfather William Edward CRAFT was born Nov. 24, 1839 in Brownsville, Pennsylvania and died in Vermont, Illinois, August 16, 1925, at the age of eighty-five years. He married Mary Jane MERCER April 10, 1863. There were to this union nine children born three of whom died in infancy. The living were Charles, Ray, Vina, Eva, Wilmer, and Carl. Ray married Lillie BOGUE of Table Grove, Illinois to whom were born one daughter Dorothy who married Don GRISSOM. They had one son, Donald, Jr. who had two sons.

Vina married Mark KELLER, one boy Clifford and three girls Mary, Margaret, and Mildred were born to this union. Mary married Doan EDIE and they had three children, two girls Virginia and Annabeth and a boy Jack.

Margaret was adopted by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas NOBLE of Rushville, Ill. Mildred married Mr. Fred ENGEL and twin boys Fred and Mark were born to them. Eva married James COMPTON, a professor at Eureka College and three girls Marian Elizabeth, Ruth Evelyn, and Eleanor Jane were born to them. Wilmer married Olive MUSGROVE and they had two boys-Edward William and James Wilmer and two girls Wilma Earlene, and

Sarah Jane. Carl married Florence WETZEL to whom was born one girl Margaret, who married Herman FORSTER and two boys, Howard and Wendell. Howard passed away on Oct. 17, 1971. Don CARLTON married Eveline NOLAN and they had two girls Donna Kathleen and Margaret Arnett and one son Allen Bruce.

Grandfather CRAFT was a carpenter and a plasterer by trade. He could make beautiful cornice work and decorative ceilings from plaster. In later life he installed blackboards in school houses. His company had one school house that the board turned white every time it was installed. He discovered a way to prevent this from happening. Naturally his boss wanted to know how this was done but Grandfather CRAFT told him no not until he retired, which he did. Grandmother CRAFT was born Mary Jane MERCER. She had two brothers, John and William MERCER and a sister Katherine. Grandfather CRAFT had a twin brother named George and four other brothers named Anderson, Maxville, Bowman, and Eli. He also had two sisters, Mrs. Eurith (CRAFT) SAURBAUGH and Mrs. Mary (Mack Leighty). These original Crafts were born in Brownsville, Pennsylvania to Brownfield and Evalina (WHITE) CRAFT. They all came to the middle west. Mary, Eurith and William settled in Vermont, Ill., Anderson and Mack in Galesburg, Ill., Bowman in Virginia, Ill., Eli in Linden, Iowa, and George in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Grandmother CRAFT died May 15, 1927.

Mother's maiden name was Laura Bell AKERSON. Mother's mother Sarah KEELER had married John AKERSON but later were divorced. She later married Malangthon MILLER. To this union one son Harry was born, who married Bess ALEXANDER and they had two sons, Robert and Russell MILLER. Grandfather AKERSON was a Captain in the Blackhawk war. He had a Captain's sword which he gave to me. I knew very little about him for I was a big boy before I knew of him. He lived in Lewistown, Illinois. Grandfather MILLER was the grandest man I ever knew and I worshipped him. He was a Civil War Veteran and had been wounded in the shoulder and received \$55.00 a month pension which was a lot of money in that early day. Every time I saw him he would give me some money. It started out as a penny and as I grew older he increased it to a dime. Because of his injury he was unable to do manual labor but stood a race horse stud. He often hitched it to a cart to exercise it and took me for a ride. I always loved horses. In my real early childhood my father ran a livery stable and he had quite a string of horses and buggies for hire. Grandmother MILLER was a very ambitious woman and had a very good head for business. She kept about half dozen head of Jersey milk cows and ran a small dairy, as I remember. She died about 1915 and left Mother \$6,000.00 in her will. Grandfather wore a full beard and he was an awfully sloppy eater at the table. Grandmother had a metal tray for him about one inch deep and when he got through eating with the coffee and everything in it was swimming. Grandmother just use to ride him terribly so I thought she didn't love him, but I found out how wrong I was because on his death bed she mourned so for him that I knew she really did love him. This was the first time I realized what this life was all about.

Grandfather MILLER had one daughter, Etta by a previous marriage. She was married to John UPDEGRAFF, a wealthy farmer who lived on his own farm south 'of Bushnell, Illinois. They had one son Ray and two daughters, Blanch and Helen. They had an automobile back in those early days. It was a touring car without any doors. Since we had no paved roads at all we had to wear a duster even if we made a trip of five or more miles or get covered with dust. I remember that Harry had a Mitchell car back in 1912.

Oil was discovered over near Colmer, Illinois, and one Sunday he drove our whole family over there. It started to rain and we had a hard time getting back home.

Grandmother CRAFT was a sweet lovable little woman. She was one of the best cooks ever-specially her pumpkin and custard pies they were the best. We always had Christmas dinner at her place.

In 1907, I joined the Vermont Christian Church during a revival and was baptized. Mother was a very devote member of the Church and I always attended Sunday School very faithfully. For my 1000/c attendance record I was awarded some books. My uncle Wilmer taught our Sunday School class and we had two baseball teams. In those early days we didn't have the radio or television so we had to make our own entertainment. The Church always held the Thanksgiving dinner. Most of the women of the church helped and this was the way they made some money. I helped to earn my dinner.

My teenage life passed uneventfully from grade school to my second year in high school at Vermont. My father taught me how to work. We had a feed lot of about twenty acres about one-half mile east of Vermont that I would have to go to every morning before school and every evening after school. I had a Shetland Pony to ride and would go to feed and pump water for the hogs and cattle. While other boys were playing my time was taken up with these duties. When school was out I went to the farm everyday and rolled and plowed corn and drove the hay horse that pulled the hay up in the barn with a fork tied on to a rope. When this was over, the corn laid by, the wheat and oats harvested, and the hay put up we went on a vacation to Hickory Island which was four miles north of Browning, Illinois on the Illinois River. Father belonged to the Vermont gun club. The club owned 1100 acres of water and land which consisted of Hickory Island and Stuart Lake and was one of the best fishing spots in Ill. There was a stew between the Island and a narrow neck of land and we used to catch Channel Catfish on trout lines weighing up to 30 lbs. There were about six, two room cottages built on the north end of the Island. We would spend about two weeks at the island in August. At first, before we had our own cottage, one of the other members would invite us down to their place for a week. The next winter we took two teams and wagons during Christmas vacation and hauled the lumber down for our own cottage. It was about twelve miles, very cold, and we had to walk all the way to keep warm. We loaded the lumber into boats and rowed it across the river. The next spring Dad took two carpenters down and built our cottage. It was built up on seven foot poles for the river came up in the spring and flooded it if you didn't. How do you think the present day boys would like to go through the hardships we did to have the pleasures we had? It was worth all the hardships for if we didn't work we wouldn't have had the pleasures for sure.

In July we went down to the Island for a few days to go frog gigging because the law was out and frog gigging was against the law. Two of us would get into a row boat, take a flashlight and row along the shore where the bullfrogs would be, turn the flashlight on them, blind them then spear them with a gig. We could get 30 or 40 frogs in an hour and were they good. Later on in August we would go sun fishing with a hook and line in the daytime and catch sun fish broader than your hand. In the evenings we would set our trout line and then run them in the morning. There was also plenty of bass fishing if you enjoyed that. The club owned a cottage that they let a caretaker live in for watching the cottages. He made his living running a musseling boat picking up shells from which

buttons are made. He had two sons living in a tent on the Island and we would go down every night to listen to their tall tales.

We lived in Vermont, Illinois until the fall of 1911. On March 11, 1911 my brother Charles Edwin CRAFT was born. In the fall of that year we moved to Galesburg, Illinois where Madelene and I entered High School. I was invited to membership in the Lincoln Debating Club which was quite an honor. I had taken printing in the Vermont High School, took a second year course and in my last year of high school was appointed teacher after two men, Gregg Olson and Herbert Linquist, two Knox College men had resigned. I graduated from Galesburg High in 1913. I hadn't taken the right subjects to enter Knox College so went back to High School for another year, going to my classes in the morning and teaching printing in the afternoon. I had been elected President of the Lincoln Debating Club and was on the High School debating team. We debated Monmouth High School and won.

I began dating Ethel Custer and every Friday night several couples went to Dr. Farrel's Dancing School. The cost was 75 cents plus streetcar fare. If we went to the Ice Cream Parlor that was another 20 cents. My father would give me a dollar which wasn't quite enough so I told him so. He said if I wanted more I would have to go out and earn it which I did. I flat got a job ushering in the nickelodion theater Just imagine a picture show for only a nickel. I got a job with the Galesburg Evening Mail after school getting the paper tagged and over to the Post Office in a cart for \$1.75 per week. I later got another job at a theater where I learned to assist the man running the picture machine. Later on I got a job reading Gas and Electric meters for the Utility Company. They had a man who read the meters. The city was divided into 26 routes which he read for the 26 days of the month. I was hired as the stray meter reader and if he missed reading anyone's meter a second try was made and that was my job. I was paid so much an hour and kept my own time. I made about 30 to 40 dollars a month which included free transportation on the streetcars. In 1913 Galesburg won the Illinois State basketball championship. I had become acquainted with Crawford Elder and Lester Prichard and we had a very close friendship. The coach had asked Elder and me to take charge of selling the tickets for each game at the tournament and we asked him if we could sell the programs for the tournament too and he said we could. I printed them at the school so they cost us nothing and we made a nice profit. Every year someone promoted a football dance with all the football players getting in free. We made a small profit after paying for the orchestra and dance hall. We continued to hold the dances once a week for the rest of the school year which was about five months. All in all, my earnings in all my jobs totaled about 100 dollars a month which was pretty good money because at the time a dollar was worth a dollar.

After school was out in 1913, I got a job working in the Union Restaurant waiting tables. I started on Tuesday and by Saturday I was so tired working 12 hours a day I couldn't think straight. Just before my time was up on Saturday the headwaiter asked me to turn the water on in the water cooler. This was a vessel divided into three sections, one was for ice, one for water and one was for the milk. I was so tired after standing on my feet all day I forgot about turning the water on in the water cooler and the water soon ran over into the ice and milk. After I finished eating I left and on my way out the boss, Mr. Arthur Stern, fired me.

After that I went out to the brick yard and got a job carrying water to a bunch of Greeks at 34 cents per hour. First, I had to go down in the yards and pick up a couple pieces of ice which weighed 25 lbs. each, put a wire on them, hook them on the wooden yoke that fitted across my shoulders and carry them up the hill to a wooden icebox. Then I had to go across a field to a farm house and get two buckets of water, carry them on the yoke to the icebox. This took only about an hour and half and would last until noon. The Company had to take 10 feet of dirt off the clay which they did with a steam shovel. They used a little dinky steam engine with about six small dirt cars. These were loaded with the dirt, hauled out several hundred feet away, where about 12 of the Greek workers would dump the cars and then shovel the dirt down the hill. I didn't have anything to do so I helped with the track which was always in soft dirt and needed raising in different places. I would get a pole and rig up a fulcrum and hold the track up so the Greeks could tamp dirt under the ties. After that they would use a steam train and steam shovel to take the clay into the yards. My boss was in charge of this whole operation. The men operating both steam shovels were working against him so he had to spend a lot time down there. Eventually he left me in charge. I got along very well with the Greeks and learned to talk a little of their language and report their time. They all liked me and I got more work out of them when the boss was gone, so he said. The head Greek foreman had a young brother who had come over from Greece too young to be a laborer, he was only 14 years old. They gave him my old job carrying water. The new water boy didn't do anything except carry water. They put on a plow that had to be coupled to the train. After dumping the cars it would plow the dirt away from the track and then I would uncouple it. When school started in the fall they wanted me to stay on but I didn't want to do that. The Superintendent of the Yards told my father I was the best young man that had worked there for a long time. My boss quit about the first of August so I ran the hill for the rest of the time. Sometime after the first of the year the Knox College Fraternities began rushing the High School Seniors. Cap Elder, Les Pritchard, and I had been to three of the fraternity houses for dinner but had not been to the Phi Delt house. Les had a brother a year ahead of him and Cap had a cousin who were Phi Gam's. Everyone thought we would all go Phi Gam but Cap and I wanted to be Phi Delt's, although we had never been asked there to dinner. The Phi Gam's didn't like my grades but Cap's cousin told him they were going to take me because we were all such good friends. Finally, on Feb. 4, the Phi Delt's invited Cap and I down for dinner. After dinner Hud Prince and Franz Harshbarger asked me into their chapter room and invited me to pledge. I told them that Cap and I wanted to pledge together. They said he was next. I told them to get Cap in there, which they did and then they repeated their invitation to Cap. Cap said, "What do you think, Mark"? and I said, "It looks like they have caught us with our pants down." It caused quite a flurry over at the High School. Cap's cousin came and talked to him and tried to get him to give his pledge button back. He said the Phi Gam's would even take me if he would pledge. You can imagine how I felt. However, I did get my revenge later which I will tell you about. Of course Les felt terrible and said he would 90 Phi Delt if he had the chance. We tried to get the job done but the Phi Delt's wouldn't go for it because of his brother, but 20 years later his own son pledged Phi Delt. We were initiated Dec. 19, 1914. I finished that first school year out but didn't come back the next year as Dad had some financial reverses and felt he didn't have the money. I did go back the following year but only stayed the first semester and then quit. I was going to go farming in the Spring. I had

met Lucy WASSON in 1911 but didn't start courting her seriously until six months before we were married on June 30, 1917.

I had convinced two of my best friends in Vermont to Attend Knox College in the fall of 1915. They were big athletes, Temple Price, who eventually became a quarterback on the Knox football team and a catcher on the baseball team and Glenn Rankin, who was an end on the football team and a pitcher on the baseball team. I expected them to be Phi Delt's but they felt they just couldn't afford the money and had better wait the first year. Glenn dropped out of College after football season and joined the army. The Phi Gam's were after Temple and gave him a job waiting tables at the Fraternity house for his meals. I told him I didn't want him to go Phi Gam and he promised me he wouldn't and would talk to me before he did anything. Along in May he came to me and told me they were pressuring him to pledge. I asked him what he wanted to do and he said go Phi Delt. Glenn Rankin returned to school and the Phi Gam's used the same tactics. They also gave him a job waiting tables. I told him the same thing I had told Temple that when he got ready to pledge to let me know. He did in May so we pledged him Phi Delt. So I had my revenge for what the Phi Gam's had done to me. In 1919 Knox's football team with Temple at quarterback, Glenn at end, and another Phi Delt, Lane Bridgford at full back swamped the conference and had a perfect season. Cap's cousin could not understand why I had such a hold on these two men; we were life long friends and as Phi Delta Theta is the greatest fraternity of them all he couldn't realize.

After my marriage to Lucy we moved to a farm about two miles East of Vermont. Dad remodeled the old farm house and we set up housekeeping after the wedding. I had made enough furniture for our living room in my High School manual training class, a davenport, library table and Morris chair. In February of 1918 while we were in town shopping we had a fire which burned up everything but a dresser and cedar chest. The house was a total loss. Dad bought a house and eight acres on to the West end of Vermont for us to live in. We had 500 dollars fire insurance and we made a deal with Mr. Mendenhall of the local furniture Co. to go to the wholesale house in Burlington, Iowa and buy our furniture with the price to be wholesale plus 100/c and freight. We didn't find a dinning room set that we particularly liked but decided on one tentatively. On our way home we looked around furniture stores in Galesburg and saw the same set we had seen in Burlington. We priced it and the price at retail was lower than the price in Burlington. When we got back home we confronted Mendenhall and the big crook said he would show us his invoices which he did so we went ahead with the deal.

My son Jacob Frederick CRAFT was born Oct. 5, 1918. The next year Dad traded his house in town to Grandfather CRAFT for his ten acres and house just a short distance from where we were living. Dad had originally sold him the ten acres off a farm of 110 acres. We moved to this. Dad moved to where we were living and grandfather moved to the house in town. I was always a great lover of horses and I always had a team ready to sell the horse buyer each spring. My Uncle Harry Miller had a team of mules I liked very much. I bought them for 400 dollars which my Dad thought was too high a price.

During the winter Dad bought a 200 acre farm near Maquon, Illinois. We were to move there because we wanted to be closer to Galesburg. I had a sale to move off surplus equipment and livestock. The horse buyer had been trying to buy the span of mules before the sale and I had priced them at 600 dollars. Just before the sale the horse buyer came to me and wanted to know where the mules were and I told him they were down at

the other farm as I planned to take them with me to Maquon. He got me to price them again at 600 dollars and he bought them. I was sick about it but delivered them to him. I had bought a Ford tractor, plow and disc, so I needed only one team of horses which I kept.

We moved to Maquon in the spring of 1920. The first World War had ended Nov. 11, 1918, and prices were still high but by the following fall began to go down. I had raised 40 hogs, prices in Oct. were starting to fall, they were as high as 22 and V2 cents per pound. I shipped the hogs and it took about four days to get them on the market but by that time they brought only 12 cents per pound. This was quite a blow. I then started to shuck my corn. I had 110 acres and was unable to hire a cornpicker as most of them demanded an elevator to unload the corn. I just thought I would wait until the other farmers had their corn picked and then there would be more pickers. Up to that time I had never taken a team to the field so I didn't have any idea what I could do. At first I picked 75 bushels a day but improved and finally was picking up to 100 bushels a day which is considered very good. Times were hard and money hard to come by so I decided not to hire a picker. I finished picking corn on the 16th of Feb. I didn't pick when it was snowing or when snow was on the ground. The next year, 1921, I put in less corn but put 80 acres in Oats. The price was low at threshing time so I put them in the bin on the farm. I sold them during the winter and called on my best neighbor to help me. As usual in the country when the phone rings every house wife on the line listens in. The teams and wagons began to roll in and in the end I didn't have any oats left for my wagon. It just goes to show what the country folks of that community would do for you.

Annabelle CRAFT was born July 30, 1921. During the winter of that year Dad traded the Maquon farm to Mr. Rich of Galesburg for the Garwood 160 acres on the Abingdon Road on the southwest edge of Galesburg. Mr. Rich had paid 550 dollars per acre and with corn down to 10 cents per bushel, there was no way to make a profit. Taxes were high and on 80 acres within the city limits the taxes were about double. There were two houses on the farm. Dad and Mother moved into the big house and Lucy and I moved into the second house.

We decided to go into the dairy business and started to build a dairy herd. We put some wooden stanchions in one of the barns, room for 40 cows. We built a milk house and a cooler room. I began building a retail milk route and eventually had three grocery stores, two restaurants and one hotel buying my milk. Two years later we had the herd built up to 40 cows but had to buy milk and cream from three of our neighbors to complete our supply. We put in a cooling machine to cool the milk and a small steam boiler and bottle washer. We sold raw milk, took care of it properly, and had few complaints as our milk kept so good. In all our milk business we never lost a customer for if anything went wrong I was always right there to make it right.

On March 11, 1924, Marcia CRAFT was born. The dairy business was a hard life. I had to get up at 4:00 every morning, Sundays included, and didn't finish until six p.m., a fourteen hour day. In the summertime after supper I took the bulk milk to the hotel and restaurants saving refrigeration on the milk and making my work day a 16 hour day. By the summer of 1924, with the summertime evening delivery I was really pooped. Sometimes after getting back from my milk deliveries at noon I would lay down for a little nap. When I did Dad was over to criticize me for the farming needed looking after. He was right but it was just more than I could take, I only weighed 155 pounds.

During the fall my father-in-law, J. K. WASSON came out and asked me to go to work for him. I never liked him but when he told me he was going to retire I became interested. I asked him what he had to offer me. He told me he was 58 years old and in two more years he wanted to retire. He would then be 60 and he wanted to do some traveling in the next ten years. He offered me 150 dollars a month. I turned him down as I wasn't interested in just a job and that I had saved 2000 dollars during the past year besides living expenses. He kept coming back, and said he couldn't take me in as a partner as when he had hired Lee Laird, his road man, he had intimated he would eventually become a partner. For 18 years he had put Lee off and kept him satisfied with wages. He said he didn't know how I would like the business and might not make good. I still said no. He kept coming back so I finally made him a proposition. I told him I would come in for a year. I had talked it over with my father and he would run the dairy farm for that year. At the end of that time I could go back and take over the dairy if I wanted, and J. K. could make up his mind if he was willing to take me in as a partner. If things didn't work out I would go back to the farm and no one would be hurt only I would be out of the profit of a year. He agreed and told me to come in. I worked for a year. I hurt myself loading some wool bags in the country and had to lay off work for two weeks. Then I came back but it was too soon and had to lay off again. By that time the wool season was over. Along about the middle of December J. K. said I had better work another year because I really didn't get into the wool season. I told him I made him a proposition and I expected him to live up to it. He finally offered me a 1/4 working interest and Lee Laird the same. About a week later he told me Lee turned him down and held out for a raise of 250 dollars per year on his wages. I told him if Lee had accepted his deal I was not going to accept it.

At the end of the year we ended up with a carload of fine Western wool that we probably had a loss in. I didn't ask him for an accounting. I wasn't living on 150 dollars, but took what it cost me to live. At the end of the next year I asked for an accounting. He asked my why and I said just wondered what my 1/4 interest amounted to over the two year period. Why he said you haven't got an interest. I said I was working under that assumption. He said, "When Lee turned me down I didn't think you cared." In the three years that I had been there I had bought twice as much wool as Lee had, it came in 2 cents a pound cheaper and my hide purchases were about as much as Lee's and both of us traveled the same territory. Lee was a fine fellow and well liked on the road and had a tremendous sense of humor. He came in off of the road each weekend with a good story. Lucy and I belonged to a bridge club of six couples and I always had a good story to tell them. Well, I told J. K. that I was going to look for something else to do. He said. "You think you are pretty smart. I want to take a little trip to Texas and Hot Springs and will be gone about a month. I'm going to leave you in charge to see what you can do." Before he left he sold all the hides and we had a clean warehouse.

While he was gone I was to the make prices for Lee. The market was low and very dull. In cases like this J. K. would keep Lee and I in off the road for one or two weeks and whenever the market perked up then he would come down to the office and tell us to get out and buy up the hides. I always thought this was wrong so while I was in charge I sent Lee out and went out myself and bought the hides at a cheaper price. When J. K. got home we had the warehouse full. He got busy and sold them. When we had them all shipped and invoiced I asked him how we came out. He said we made a little



money, in fact we had made over 7000 dollars which he wouldn't admit to. I thought we had done real well and he would do something about the partnership. He told me that I could share in the profits but not the losses and for this reason he refused to do anything. I went home and talked to Lucy and told her what a no good so and so her father was, his word was no good and he had a black heart. He couldn't stand to see anyone happy and was always riding Lee about his girl friends. Well there wasn't much I could do but stay until the year was over and then I could make some plans. I told him I wanted to know by the first of Dec. if he was going to do anything. I waited until the middle of the month, giving him a chance to say something, he didn't, so I brought it up again. He said he hadn't given it a thought. I got up and went down to see Mr. Custer and Nirdlinger at the Galesburg National Bank and told them my story. Mr. Custer said it was a family affair and didn't want to interfere but to go on back and get what I wanted and if I didn't get what I wanted to come on back and see him. I walked out of his bank on air. About the first of the year J. K. said "What do you want?" I answered him and said "I want a 1/2 interest with a written contract because your word's no good." He said "O.K." just like that. It was 1929 the year the great depression started. We were doing pretty good and broke even that year. I had built up quite a hide business and as I said before was bringing in as many hides as Lee. He had all the easy customers to deal with and I had the tough ones. Two customers that I have in mind are Al Ater of Monmouth and Leroy Pease of Viola. Both ran wet rendering businesses. They both were hard to break in with. Ater was selling to Sig. Adler and Company in Chicago. I finally broke in with him and knew when the Chicago man was due to call so about a week before he was due I had him cleaned up so he finally quit coming. One day when Ater and I were going out to his plant to take up his grease and hides he said to me, "Mark, do you know why I like to sell to you?" I told him I guessed because I paid him more than anyone else. He told me, "No, sometimes I think I might get more from the Chicago man but when I ask you how the market is you tell me the truth. Now I generally know how the market is but when you tell me it's hot or down I ask just to see what you will say." Leroy Pease was different. I had a customer ten miles west of Viola. I made his plant every three weeks. For a solid year I called on Leroy, he would ask me what I was paying. I always gave him a strong price and he always told me he sold for a dollar more for horse hides and 1 cent per pound on beefhides. I knew these were lies but let on like I believed him even though he was a liar he appreciated the truth. Lee didn't get along with him. I told Leroy I wasn't going to call on him anymore. I told him I had called every three weeks for a year. I couldn't buy the baby any shoes. He told me to stop in the next time I came along and if my price was right he would sell me a load. I did and I made him a strong price. He said he had been offered more but since I was there he would let me have them. It was this way everytime and I always told him if I had to pay more I couldn't make any money and if I couldn't make money I couldn't come back, but he always sold to me.

We had decided to build a new modern rendering plant. A new dry rendering system had been developed and it was quite an improvement over the old wet system. When I first came into the business Lee Laird would kid before the hide take up man George Johnson from H. Elkan Company of Chicago. Lee told George, "He was up against it now." "J. K. had tried two other road men but they had failed to add anything to the business. He said they both wanted me to divide up my territory with them, which I would not do." Then he would tell him he was up against a son-in-law now and he would

be the one to go. I told him, "If I wasn't able to add some profit to the business on my own I would be the one to go." But Lee didn't put much faith in that promise. So I told him, as I had begun to realize after being there awhile, "Eventually I will be reaching further away from home and turning the Illinois business over to you Lee.

We hired a foreman, a couple of bricklayers and other laborers, and started in to build the rendering plant. The foreman we hired told us he had built the Colored Y.M.C.A. in Indianapolis Indiana. Right away he made two mistakes. The first mistake he made was not getting the concrete forms secure enough and one side got away from us. The second mistake he made was not getting the foundation for the boiler in the right place. Naturally I raised plenty of hell with him and he quit. A colored man came out one day and asked for a job laying brick. I asked him what he charged and he said 90 cents an hour. I told him I was paying the two dumps I had 75 cents an hour. He said, after watching them work, "If I can't lay more than both of them together you won't need to pay me anything." I replied, "Come to work." I know he tried himself and the two men felt ashamed and quit. I began to help him and it wasn't long before I could lay quite a few bricks myself. We had a 70 foot wall to lay. In one day we had both comers laid up and laid 5000 paver bricks which were 4 x 3 Y2 x 8, which is something. It took 3 men to mix the mud and hustle the bricks to us. I had a man by the name of Mark Munday working for us who was a scrub carpenter so we got along good. We finished the plant in the fall. I had influenced several small wet plants to close and start hauling their dead stock to us. We had a good volume to start with but the prices kept falling. It was hard to make any money and by late spring we were having odor trouble with the neighbors. In late June we ran into real hot weather. The horses were dying like flies during the grain harvest because they were overheated. The plant became over crowded with dead stock. I told J. K. we would have to stop the haulers until we got cleaned up. He wouldn't listen to me, the haulers would call him and he would say "Come ahead." The neighbors were raising so much hell so the veterinarian, who was head of the board of health, said "Close the plant." I told him if we closed again I would never open it. I told J. K. if he would let me run the plant I would get along with the neighbors. By this time there wasn't much use to keep on fighting for the year was 1932 when the market on all commodities were at their lowest. Hides were down to 2 cents per pound, horse hides 1.00 dollar each, and corn down to 10 cents etc. The wool market was no exception. I hauled wool to Carron spinning Company in Rochelle, Ill. at 10 cents per pound and sold them another load at the same price. Then I sold a load to Silberman in Chicago at 10 cents. When I was in Chicago I sold them another load at 10 cents, but when I got there with the wool they only gave me 9 cents per pound. When I returned home I told J. K. we couldn't sell anymore wool. We put our buying price down to 7 cents and decided we would have to sit on it. We had a good customer in Fairview, Ill., the elevator Co., with Mr. Wilcoxsen in charge. He said he would hold his wool too. By the time the season was over we had accumulated 50,000 pounds and Mr. Wilcoxsen 25,000 pounds. Along in August the wool market began to advance so I got busy and bought Wilcoxsen's wool for 11 cents per pound. Wool buyers began calling us from all over including Silberman from Chicago. I told him about the shortage on the last load I hauled to him and wouldn't sell him anymore wool. He wanted to know how much they had shorted us and I gave him the figures. He said he would mail us a check and asked if I would give him a chance on our wool. I said yes, if his price was better than any other. We were finally offered 18 cents

and Silberman 17 cents. 1932 was a tough year but we made over 1 1,000 dollars net in the heart of the depression.

J. K. had his favorites when it came to selling his merchandise. H. Elkan Co.-for Hides, Herman Reel-Wool, Slivken-Fur, and Joe Novotney on Grease and Tallow. They were all crooks with the exception of Novotney. Elkan always got the Calf and Kip skins included in the hide price. I soon put a stop to this for I had to pay more on the road for them. Herman Reel's take up man took advantage in grading the wool. I got rid of him, because I had learned to grade wool as good as anyone and we hooked up with a broker in Boston shipping direct to the mills. Slivken was the worst of all. I had a customer in Canton, Ill. Sam and Barney Gavenda. Several years before, J. K. bought a load of hides from them and told me to go take up the hides. He said, "Everytime Lee takes up the hides from them he comes up short in weight so go on down and see what you can do." I had too many hides to haul on my truck so I had to tie the excess in bundles to ship by rail. Sam Gavenda rolled a small truck load of beef hides on the scales as I was tying the last horse hide and called out the weights to me. I said, "Wait a minute I want to see the hides weighed." He said, "You wouldn't think I'd try to cheat you would you?" I said, "That's not it, there are a few duties that I get paid for and this is one of them." In all my experience with those two brothers they never tried to beat me. The one thing I found out about the Jewish People is if you take care of your business they really respect you. There was one day in particular when I arrived in Canton and Slivken had arrived ahead of me. He had graded the Gavenda's fur and they were all going round and round over the grade and prices. It lasted for about an hour, and in the meantime I had seen the grade and the prices and Slivken was about trying to steal them. After Barney ran him off I asked Barney, "How about selling me the fur." He said would I buy them and I said, "Yes and pay you what Slivken offered." He sold them to me and we loaded them in wool bags on top of the hides. There were 5 bags of fur and when I got home J. K. wanted to know what was in the wool bags. I told him fur which I bought from Gavenda. He said he was going to hate to see this. I told him Slivken had been there had graded the fur and Gavenda had run him off. I told him the fur had all been graded by Slivken. "Take it upstairs and put the prices on it and figure the total invoice." He did and figured it about 200 dollars more than my invoice. He couldn't understand why this had happened. It wasn't hard for me to understand for Slivken tried to steal the fur, Gavenda was mad at him, ran him off, and was willing to sell to me at Slivken's bid. Slivken went back after I had left so he knew I had bought this fur. He came by our place the next morning and bought this fur along with ours. I made about 500 dollars on the deal, but I'd had enough of Slivken, he was a liar and I decided to sell a bunch of fur to Sollie Gordon from Davenport. We had purchased a trailer truck and I started buying hides in all of Iowa and Nebraska. Before I left on one of these trips I told J. K. not to sell anymore fur until I got back. He called me in Iowa saying Slivken was there and we had a good profit on the fur. I told him Gordon would be down on Sunday and I'd promised him we wouldn't sell the fur. When I returned Gordon gave us over 1000 dollars more for the lot than Slivken. I had worked up the company's hide business and his wool business from 200,000 pounds to 800,000 pounds in 1935 netting 39,000 dollars for that year.

My hide business had grown so fast and I needed some help on the take ups so I wanted to hire another man. I had talked to Merle Delph who had taken up a car of hides from the warehouse while working for an Indianapolis firm. The business was getting to

big for J. K. and he didn't like it. I was doing most of the buying and selling and he wasn't happy. During the short run of the rendering plant I sold horsehides to Kurt Friend of J. Greenebaum Tanning Company in Chicago and we received quite a bit more than Elkan was paying us. By 1936 prices had climbed up quite a bit and he wanted to start up the plant. I said that I was too busy. He said, "you got me to spend 35,000 dollars on the rendering plant and now you don't want to have anything to do with it." I told him if we reopened I wanted to run it so if the neighbors came to him he could send them to me and I would be able to get along with them. He said he couldn't give me the plant and I told him that I hadn't meant for him to give it to me.

I left J. K. Wasson and Co., July 1, 1936. I had persuaded him to sell his half interest in the plant to Arthur Faber in Peoria. We added some more equipment and reopened. When we had everything settled my half of the company was 1/2 interest in the rendering plant, 4000 dollars in cash, three trucks, and an automobile. I took Merle Delph in as a partner, organized M. C. Craft & Co., and started in business. Merle had bought an awful lot of horsehides in Iowa that had accumulated during the last few years because of the low prices. We opened a branch house in Springfield in late 1935 with John McGowan an experienced wool man. I got this branch in the deal. He hired a colored man, Freddie Morse, and what a jewel he was. I sent Pat Hagan down as road man to buy hides and wool. We hired a colored man, Ben Williams to run the warehouse in Galesburg and Clyde Forshee was our road man and truck trailer driver. Everything went along smoothly until the next wool season. About April 1, 1937, I went down to J.K. to see how much territory in wool he was going to try to cover and he told me the usual. By 1935 we had quit buying wool in the country and had established dealers in different towns to buy for us. I told him Lee wouldn't have time to service them all. He asked me what territory I wanted and I told him. He told me to come back in a couple of days and he would let me know. I had told him I wanted the southern territory including the Quincy run. He said he would agree but he wanted to keep two old customers that he had before I had ever been with the firm, Rushville and Macomb. A few days later one of the customers from Clayton called and told me he was sorry that I wouldn't be trading with them that year. I asked him who said I wouldn't and he said Lee Laird had been through Clayton and told him I had left the firm. I said, "Hold the phone, I was going to come see you." I made the rounds of all the buyers in the next few days since J.K. had gone back on his word. I didn't lose one buyer and picked up Rushville and Macomb along with the others. So the fight was on to the detriment of both of us because one man went back on his word. I have always tried to live by my word it was my bond and if I told anyone I would do a certain thing or made a promise I always tried to live up to it. Not so with J.K. WASSON, he was a liar and a word breaker. As a consequence we were both paying too much for wool and made no money in fact we lost money on our entire operation. J. K. sent Lee down to hire Pat Hagen away from us. Pat was no trader but as long as he paid more than we did he was able to hold his trade. Lee Laird had had a heart attack that fall so he was unable to stay on the road and Pat took his place. J.K. let Lee go, in payment for his long loyal service to him which shows what kind of man he was. Lee came down to see me and asked for a job keeping the office. I had to tell him I couldn't afford to add more expense to our operations the way things were going. When things start to go bad everything follows suit. I had hired a young chap by the name of Burl Barrash as a buyer on the road and Gene Murphy, Delph's brother-in-law to drive the trailer. Barrash got to

stealing hides. He would come in late at night and unload his day's purchases by the scale and then load some other hides on his truck. He'd leave early the next morning without seeing me, take the hides out to a rendering plant at Spring Valley, Ill., where he had a deal. They would add the stolen hides to the renderers invoice then the renderer would split with Barash. It was Smitty who worked for the rendering Company who tipped me off. Murphy and a colored man were stealing hides and wool from the rendering plant. I tried to catch Barash by sleeping in a hotel room across from the warehouse but no luck. I got impatient, confronted the colored man from the plant, so he owned up to it and told me all about the operation. I had the three of them arrested, a trial was held, and the judge sent all three of them to the Vandalia Penal farm. I tried to save the colored man from going to jail but it was no use.

About this time my son Frederick graduated from High School. He was just 18 and what a wonderful age this is. It's the age when you think you know it all and there is not much more to learn, it is an age when you think your parents are very stupid and you wonder how your Dad gets by. What is eighteen? It's a question that graduation poses to every parent, for most of the boys and girls who will be marching across the schools graduation platform are about that age and to be eighteen is to be something special! Eighteen is youth on tiptoe stretching for a star. It is the sprouting of a secret ambition. It is the sweet selfishness of believing in oneself. It is the privilege of being totally unpredictable. It is the guile which disarms critics and sets middle age to reminiscing about its right to dawdle and dare and dream. Eighteen is incredulity measuring itself against the yardstick of years. It is suddenly shaping up of lifes problems. It is putting one's hand to the plow and learning to turn a straight furrow. It is the planting of the seed and cultivating the patience to wait for the harvest. It is the surprise of stepping into the stature of adulthood and finding the sensation sweet. Tomorrow perhaps it will be nineteen and not any of this. As I sat at the graduation I looked up and down the long rows of seats of Mother's and Dad's of graduates who were going through their programs, stopping to place a finger on a beloved name. Some of the men were portly and growing bald and some were handsome. Some of the Mother's pretty. Many were well dressed and successful looking; others did not look so prosperous. Yet one thing marked them all. This was their proud moment. Some boy or girl in a black gown was part of them. Their dreams were there, their ambition, their sacrifices.

Frederick drove a hide truck when he first got out of High School. Murphy was driving the Semi-trailer when he went to jail. I put Frederick on the Semi and he thought with this job he was on top of the world, for he was delivering hides all over the United States. I bought him a new Ford car when he graduated from High School and he drove it about a year and then traded it for a Chevrolet. One day he came home driving an old worn out car. He said he'd bought it to save his new car which meant another State license and another insurance policy. I blew my top and told him to get rid of it. He took his troubles down to his Grandfather WASSON who enjoyed the trouble and sympathized with him. After driving the Semi about a year he decided the job wasn't the top rung on the ladder after all, and as he had had one year in College, where he became a Phi Delt much to my pleasure, he wanted to go to a diesel or airplane school. He quit his job, his Grandfather loaned him money to go the Spartan School of Aeronautics in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He graduated in sixteen months and got a job in Canada transporting the planes to England as she was at war with Germany. When we got in the war he enlisted

in the Airforce and was sent in as a Captain. He was sent to Burma, India flying the "hump". Before he left he wanted to pay the loan off that his Grandfather lent him for school but J. K. told him "No" that he might need it to take care of his Mother. When the war was over and he returned home he found that his grandfather had charged him interest on his loan for all that time while he had the money laying in the bank. He was beginning to realize what kind of a man the old man really was. While he had been stationed in Canada he married Betsy Ann SCOTT, a native Canadian and while they were home after the war they came to Springfield to see us. He was undecided as to what he wanted to do now that the war was over-he didn't like my business so decided on staying in the service. They spent some time in Japan and Germany. On July 13, 1949, Christopher David CRAFT was born and while stationed in Frankfort Germany they adopted Maria Michaelae. She was born in Germany on Nov. 17, 1950. Betsy and Frederick had been married on Dec. 23, 1941. In 1959, while they were stationed in Germany Bee and I went to see them. We took a ship from New York to Copenhagen, Denmark, and toured Norway and Sweden. Then we went by train to Frankfort and stayed about a week. Bee, Betsy, Freddie and I took a motor trip in their car through southern Germany, Spain, Italy, and Austria. From Germany Bee and I flew to Paris, on to London returning home from England. Frederick stayed in the Air force until he retired and had advanced to a Lieutenant Colonel.

I met Mrs. Bernice (Bee) CHURCH a widow with two children, a daughter Betty Lou MILLER by a previous marriage and a son Buddy Lee Church. This was in 1934. A short time later Buddy passed away with Spinal Meningitis. I fell in love with Bee and she went every where with me mostly in the trailer truck as I has hauling lots of horse hides to Chicago. In the meantime things had gone from bad to worse for business. By 1939 when the war started I was broke. I closed the Galesburg Warehouse, told Merle Delph to go find a job and I would get back on a truck and try to make a come back. All I had left was my half interest in the rendering plant and a 20,000 dollar note at the bank. I planned to help Bee build another rendering plant, she had a little money and with my help she bought a 105 acre farm at Butler, Illinois and we started to build. We put an old wet tank in the barn and started to render. Our daughter Gail was born Nov. 1, 1937. The next spring we started to build the new plant and had it ready by fall. We moved down to Hillsboro until the plant was finished. We lived next door to Mr. and Mrs. Jim Hilt who owned the Ford garage. Jim loved Gail very much and took her with him on his sales trips. In the fall of 1942 we bought a nice home and moved to Springfield. During all this time I was doing little in hides and wool and along with the Galesburg rendering plant we were able to pay as we built. I had to let John McGowan go because he was always getting his cash mixed up with the Company's cash money and we would end up short about 40 dollars every week. Freddie Morse was my warehouse man in Springfield. He was a good honest hard working man. He could take a mean looking fleece of wool, retie it and make it look like No. 1 wool. Bee worked hard while we were in Hillsboro, looked after the Dead stock calls coming in and drove a truck when necessary. Of course the war was on and prices began to advance and we were making good money. The bank in Galesburg had been good to us, we had paid the interest on the money we owed regularly. Finally Mr. Nirdlinger said he would like for me to amortize my note and pay 250 dollars a month on it. I told him I thought I could. In the meantime I had a chance to buy the Quincy rendering plant for 1500 dollars which consisted of an old wet plant and a truck. I

told Mr. Nirdlinger about it, it provoked him that if I had that money I should be paying it on the note. I told him I wanted to be able to pay him off quick as the rendering business was very good. A few months later I walked into his bank and paid off the entire note. He saw me in Kurt Brown's office and wanted to know how I was doing. I told him when I walked out of the bank I wouldn't have to kiss his fanny anymore which was just a pun for they had been very patient with me. Tears welled up in his eyes as he said he didn't believe it so I told him to ask Kurt here. He said he and Mr. Custer always had faith in my work and ability and they were happier than I was, not from the money standpoint but because I had never betrayed their confidence. As it was inconvenient to do business at the bank in Galesburg, I opened an account at the Springfield Marine Bank. I asked Mr. Nirdlinger if he would write me a recommendation to Mr. Northup of the Marine which he did. I never saw the letter but I guess it was a dandy from what Mr. Northup intimated.

In July, 1939, Annabelle graduated from High School and I decided to send her to the University of Nebraska. Her aunt Catherine had gone to Northwestern University and had been a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma Sorority so she had a good chance to be a member. I took her to Chicago, bought her a fur coat along with some other clothes. In the fall of 1942, she called me to tell me that she had been elected honorary Colonel by the Cadet Corps. This appeared in an article in the college paper, "Going all out this year in running their own brigade the corps selected the new honorary Colonel entirely by balloting of the Junior and Senior Cadet Officers to represent them not just for one evening, but the entire year."

She was so excited she wrote me the following Letter:

"Dearest Dad:"

"Oh Dad I could hardly wait to write to you I've been so excited and happy for the last 18 hours that I'm running around with my head off. The reason you already know-I just had to call you up this morning. It really was a surprise because I just knew that I wasn't going to get it. You see another girl was to get it because she was voted as Colonel for the women's faction and the men's faction was supposed to stand behind the women's faction. But the men's faction voted for me anyway. It's wonderful!"

"I was studying last night in my robe, undressed and everything. Three of the highest officers came over after me. I about died when they told me. Then they took me over to the meeting-we sneaked in and they announced me as the new commander. They all saluted and I've never felt so weak. Then I said something, God Knows what! After that I met all the officers-congratulations, etc. Colonel Murphy was adorable-flattered and complimented me. I've got a million people to thank for-so many people were helping me. Dough did an awful lot."

"After I was in bed last night, all the Kappa's serenaded me outside my door. I've never been so completely upset, happy and dreamy in all my life, I still am. Ibs, our last honorary in the house, sent me flowers this morning. It's such a glorious feeling, I wish you were here to share it with me."

"Next Tuesday, I review the parade, I guess I'll review them all. Then, I'll lead the grand march at the ball. I can hardly wait for that. I'll probably have an army uniform, oversea hat, cape, etc. Today I go over and talk to Colonel Murphy. I don't think I've ever had anything quite so exciting happen to me. I feel rich as a king."

Love,  
Ann

You can imagine how happy and proud I was for her for she had received the highest honor, from a popularity standpoint, a University can bestow. She had always been outstanding. Marcia was already at the University of Nebraska and was also a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma.

One of the heartbreaks that happened in my life was when my brother Edwin went to Knox and I had expected him to be a Phi Delt. There were several Seniors in the Galesburg graduation class one of which was Jessie Bogue. Bogue's parents lived in Vermont most his life finally moving to Galesburg with the father taking a clerk job in the Overall Factory. Ordinarily I wouldn't mention Jessie's name but I just couldn't refrain from doing so as he made such an impact on Edwin's life. Jessie made the statement that if the Phi Delt's took Ed he would not pledge. There were about five boys in the group and they were all very close, with the exception of Edwin and Jessie. The Phi Delt's came to me with the problem to get my reaction. Now Bogue was a very brilliant boy and they didn't want to lose him. My reaction was that it was a bad precedent for a boy to dictate the decision of the chapter before he was even a pledge. I told them to pledge him and maybe we could work it out later. For two years the other three pledges and others tried to get Bogue to relent and vote for Edwin but to no avail. Finally the Sigma Nu's were after Ed and I advised him to accept as they were a good national fraternity. Bogue never turned out to be a sensation and I have never heard of him since. The sad part of it all was when my sister's boy Craft MARKS, went to Knox, Edwin helped rush him for the Sigma Nu's but I stayed out of it for Ed's sake as he had had enough disappointments. On the night of the pledging my sister called me and told me the Phi Delt's had issued him an invitation and he wanted to go Phi Delt. I checked into it and all his friends were going Phi Delt. I reasoned that Craft would be alone if he went Sigma Nu and as Edwin was out of school, Craft would be the one to suffer so I told him to go Phi Delt. This caused quite a rift between the two but later on they made up and became very close friends. Such is the outcome of one boys selfishness in the beginning like Bogue's.

I was working very hard developing business for the plant at Butler. Before I had the plant finished at Butler, Art Faber bought the rendering plants at Decatur and Springfield. I had the rendering business very well established at Springfield before he did all this. There were two haulers going to the Decatur plant before he bought it, Mervel Smith of Roby and Mr. Baldrige from Pana. I had made a deal with them to haul to Butler to me and they came over about the time Faber took over Decatur. Now as I have related we were partners in the Galesburg plant and we were in a race for the territory in south central Illinois. He called me and told me to send those two haulers back to Decatur which I refused to do. He said he was going to make it rough for me,



which he tried to do but failed. Faber was a few days late in the Quincy deal and said he had heard I had an option on the Mendota plant. I told him I had and he wanted to know what I was going to do about it. I told him I hadn't made up my mind so he told me while Rome was burning he was going to buy it. I told him that he didn't know Pete Sondergroth that his word was not like his. Faber went to Mendota and offered him 1000 dollars more than my option but got nowhere. I went up the next week and told Pete I just had too much on hand, labor was getting hard to get and I wasn't too sure about getting equipment for a new plant as his old wet plant had burned down and that I was just going to have to pass. Then he told me about Faber's offer. I told him I knew Faber would be to see him. "Mark", he said, "You are the greatest. You could have bought and sold it to Faber for the 1000 dollars profit which I believe he would have paid you." "Pete", I said, "I'm not in the business of selling rendering territory, especially to my competitors." All this time I was buying Faber's horsehides. Why? Because Greenebaum allowed me to pay more than anyone else. I went on back thru Peoria to try to buy another trailerload of horsehides. He was all ears and wanted to know what I had done about exercising my option. I told Faber that I turned it down. He exploded and wanted to know why I didn't buy it for him. I told him that I had no reason to do that after the way he did on the deal, and that he could go on up and try to buy it. Nothing I should do now but to go up there with him and try to clinch the deal, which I did but to no avail as Pete wouldn't sell. Pete later told me he would run it awhile longer until I was ready for it. He was hauling the deadstock up to a plant in Aurora. About a year later he called me and said he wanted to quit. I went up again, we worked the price out to both of our satisfaction and I took another option and went on into Chicago to see if I could get equipment and found I could so I bought it. Pete was one of the finest men I ever new and a real customer. I had bought all his hides for several years. He had his own ideas about the market and if I stopped by to try to buy his hides it was useless. When he got ready to sell he would call me and tell me to come and get them. Price was never mentioned until we sat around his dining room table after we had taken up the hides. I would then tell him the prices and he would always say that was about what he thought they were worth. I never took advantage of his confidence and paid him all I could to make a little money. I would run the horsehides into Greenebaum's and take the beefhides home. There was one time I had taken his hides up in the spring of the year and another year rolled around. I stopped in to see him and told him his hides should be moved that some of them had gone through the summer and I doubted they would go thru another. He didn't call me until October. I took Merle Delph along with me and we ran into just what I had thought we would. Pete always picked up the deadstock himself and he was on the truck. When he got back I told him the sad story. As Merle looked over the situation he said this was a good time to make a killing. I told Merle not with Pete, maybe with some sharpy but not with Pete. Pete asked what he should do. I told him that we should send the horsehides into Greenebaum, which we did, it was cool weather so we got by very well. The beefhides we took home, brined them good and sold them to Gross & Co. from Chicago. Who should they send down to take them up but Charles Preske, a drunk who had gotten fired at Greenebaum's for drunkenness. I had gone around and round one time in Chicago when he was grading my horsehides. I stopped him and called Kurt Friend over to look. I told Kurt I couldn't take his selection, would let him have the good ones but I would take the bad ones home that he was throwing out. Kurt saw what he was doing but didn't argue

with him but on the side I know he told him to ease up. We went ahead and finished the grading of hides. At the Galesburg warehouse I said nothing to him as he was too drunk to do a good job of grading. He didn't see the hides from Mendota that were soft on account of age so I did a wonderful job for Pete on his beefhides. He never forgot it that was the reason Pete had so much confidence in me and wanted me to have his rendering business. I started to rebuild the Mendota rendering plant in the fall of 1943 and finished it in the spring of 1944. I ran it until 1948 when I sold it to John LaForge of Rockford. He wanted it and paid me quite a profit over my cost. He had a plant at Rockford and one at Freeport.

In 1944 I started to slaughter horses, I had three shops in Chicago. We made deliveries twice a week, would load out in the evenings. It would take four men to load the truck, most of the men I had were drunks, there would be only three show up so I had to help load. The one good man I had was John Richard who rough dressed the horses out to the small farm I owned west of Springfield. We hauled them into 314 N. 8th St., dressed them out and hung the quarters in the cooler. John made the delivery into Chicago. In 1946, my three Chicago customers asked me to lower the price. I refused to although I was making good money the way I had to work I wasn't willing to do it. They quit me, a short time later they begged me to start up again but I had sold my warehouse and had bought some lots at 235 E. Carpenter St. I started to build my new warehouse and finished it by the fall of 1947. I had to borrow 16,000 dollars which my father loaned to me. By this time I had taken away most of J. K. WASSON's hide and wool business and I needed the building badly. J. K. was up in his late 80's so he finally quit. I had put in a Galesburg warehouse on the Santa Fe railroad and put Clyde Forshee in charge of it so along with this and his old age this was the end of his business career. I had the satisfaction of taking most of his business before he quit.

In 1947, two men were running a feed business in Springfield. One of them had died and the business was for sale. I told Al Stenger of St. Louis about it. He was working for a feed Company in St. Louis so he came up to look it over. They were asking 40,000 dollars for it which included a large one story brick building and grounds and a small amount of equipment. Al asked me if I would be interested in going into it with him. I finally told him I would buy the building for 35,000 dollars, rent it to the new firm, and we would need 20,000 dollars to put into a new corporation and if he could come up with 10,000 dollars I would go halves with him. He went home, came up with the money so we bought the business. We organized it into the Springfield Feed Products, made high protein feed supplements, and the first three years we did real good about enough profit for the corporation to buy the building from me. Then the business began to slip. I had never demanded a complete audit and when I did I hadn't realized how bad things were. He had always carried about 20,000 dollars inventory when he really didn't have a dollars worth. He asked me if I would sell out as he knew the audit would show that he had been stealing from the corporation. I told him I would sell at book value according to the books. I took a mortgage on the building, took 10,000 dollars down payment for my stock and the balance paid over monthly payments for three years. In the three years he had paid me off but he was thru and had to quit business. The reason his business went to pot was because he didn't keep up the quality. About the same time I bought out the Hafele Hide and Tallow Co. in St. Louis for 12,000 dollars. Chris Haelele had inherited it from his father and was going broke. The plant was in bad shape, had to have a new boiler, a

new roof, etc. After we closed the deal and he had gone out to the plant his wife began to carry on about what Chris would do. I said why not just sell half of it and he can stay on to run it. He said he didn't want to and she started in again so I said for them to sell me half of it now and if they wanted out at the end of three months I would buy the rest of it. I had two accounts in St. Louis that I was getting their horsehides, bones and fat which I had taken away from Chris. He decided to keep the one half on this basis. I turned the two accounts, Chas. L. Will and the Blue Ribbon Packing Co. over to the St. Louis plant. I had originally hauled this material to Butler. Blue Ribbon was on their last leg as I had caught them padding their daily weight sheets. There was no way the small truck I had could haul all the weight they put on the sheets each day. They had cheated me out of 10,000 dollars so I made them pay me back a little each week. Frank Dopp was the manager of the Butler plant. I asked him about the weight and he just wasn't looking after the business so I fired him. He moved to Springfield and went to work for the Springfield Feed Products selling feed on the road.

At the end of three months the Hafele plant was doing good, I did all pricing and selling so there was nothing said about selling their remaining stock. We did real good the first year and made the necessary improvements on the plant. The next year was just as good. Then Hafele's began to grumble about the division of the profits. Chris was working full-time in the plant, his wife taking care of the little book work to be done which they received 75 dollars a week. I came down on the first of the month to make prices for the people we were buying merchandise from, made an additional two trips during the month and did the selling of cracklings, hides and grease, and kept the books in Springfield. On the face of it didn't look equitable but I pointed out to them I had taken the business that was going broke, had turned it around where it was netting about 20,000 dollars a year. They still were not satisfied and asked me what I would take for my share of the business and I told them book value which was about 25,000 dollars. Just to show you their stupid thinking they thought I should sell it back to them for 6,000 dollars which is what I had paid for it. We had spent about 20,000 dollars improving it. I offered to give or take 25,000 dollars. They wouldn't do either so I forced a sale to two men who were hauling fat and bones to us. This was in 1954.

By 1959, Bill Hughes, my road man, was buying quite a few hides in the south. George Schmidt, who had three trailer trucks, was hauling them to Springfield. One customer, Dan Wooten in Tennessee had a rendering operation and Bill kept telling me about him being in the liquid fertilizer business and I asked Bill more about it. He didn't know anything more about it. I went down to investigate and found out it was anhydrous ammonia business. He had a 30,000 gallon tank installation and told me he had netted 20,000 dollars last season. This sounded good so I got George to go back down and have a look. He was more impressed than I was so before we had left we called a man from Greenville, Texas and bought a 30,000 gal. installation. In about a month we were in business. Ammonia was hard to get but Dan helped us to secure six car loads which we sold the first year. We were the first to introduce anhydrous ammonia, a high nitrogen fertilizer, into Illinois. Most farmers knew nothing about it so we had quite an educational program to put on which we did by putting on meetings mostly through the farm bureau. We also guaranteed results. One farmer had a small field of wheat that was badly winter killed. We put on some ammonia but before we got about 2/3 of the field covered he stopped us. He said we were tearing up what little he had left with the knives. Three

weeks later the applied portion of the field was about 20 inches high while the unapplied was about 6 inches. This made us for we took lots of farmers out to see it. We had good results on corn.

That fall I bought six, 6 gallon storage tank and installed twin size in Galesburg, Jerseyville and Edgewood, Illinois. Ammonia was hard to get and we had a small 19 car contract with Spencer Chemical Co. of Kansas City. Ammonia as a fertilizer was being accepted by the farmers overwhelmingly. I knew that if we expected to attract the large manufacturers we were going to have to have larger storage. Tanks were also hard to get and you had to order quite a lot in advance. Along in the summer I put in an order for 70,000 dollars worth of tanks.

In the meantime several far seeing men in the industry, Air Force General Ralph Wooten of Memphis, Ed Gill of a Memphis tank manufacturer and Jeff Davis of Albany, Georgia got together and sent out invitations to all the ammonia dealers in the U.S. The application of ammonia had been developed in the south so the southern states were very well covered. They had an organizational convention in Memphis and I was elected a director. I met some of the finest men in the organization, Agricultural Ammonia Institute (AAI).

Ammonia was a gas under pressure and hard to handle. Thru the Institute, the bulletins and magazine articles in the Agricultural Ammonia News, it was a good way to find out. The first President was Ed Gill, the second was Virgil Rule, and the third was Jeff Davis and the fourth was Emil Thomas. In 1955 I was elected to be President and this was the second big honor of my life that came my way. In the Ammonia News it was customary for the President to write a message. The news was published four times a year. Here is my first message:

"The 1954 convention has come and gone and what a wonderful successful meeting it was, thanks to E. W. Thomas our past President, Jack Cristwell our executive Vice-President, and all the convention committees. Driving to New Orleans I remarked to the good wife that I had one more year on the board of directors and then we could really enjoy the meetings, not that I haven't enjoyed with what little I had contributed over the past four years in the time spent in board and committee meetings for I had met a lot of wonderful friends and gained a world of knowledge that I wouldn't have otherwise. Now that I have been elected your new President, a lot of work lies ahead for that means three more years on the board after my tenure of President expires. I appreciate the honor and I don't believe a nicer thing has ever happened to me."

"This is your Institute and we want to run it the way you want it run. We have made mistakes in the past and will continue to make them in the future. We invite your constructive criticisms so if you have something on your mind that does not suit you, sit down and write to me or Jack Criswell at the Memphis headquarters.

"We assure you that you will get an answer. We can go along for sometime running the Institute and maybe far wrong on some procedure,

but if you don't call our attention to it, it may not be corrected. We may probably have a reason for doing it a certain way, and if you know why it may answer your question.

"For the men who are in the industry to a rough road lies ahead. We go from a short supply of Ammonia to a long supply and this condition coupled with the fact that our application is so seasonable makes it more and more a bottleneck. The people that do a good job of merchandising whether they be a producer or a distributor of Ammonia, or manufacturers of tanks, equipment, valves, etc. will survive. The Institute can help. I have some big shoes to fill as President when I think of my predecessors: Ed Gill with his knack for organization, Virgil Rule with his aggressiveness, Jeff Davis with his witticisms and Emil Thomas with his deep thinking and planning. With your help we will go forward and have our biggest year yet.

"Are you a member of the Institute or Are you taking a free ride on a vehicle which is serving your best interests but which is being fueled by your competitor and coworker? Only you can do something about it.

"An association is as strong as its membership. Membership in an association means more than paying ones dues. Membership entails responsibilities. The one big responsibility which is very definitely every members duty, i.e. assisting the institute in obtaining members. The life of an association depends upon its continued growth. An association can only grow if the members assist in that growth by obtaining memberships. If all members cooperate the Institute could grow double in size over night. It is not an impossible job if you will do your part. There are plenty of prospects but few salesmen. Remember your responsibilities.

"In the great majority of trade associations today the old world 'lobby' has given way to a broader reference such as Government relations or liaison with Government. It is impossible for industry to operate today without constant contact. What with taxes, customs, tariffs, statistics, labor regulations, quotas, government marketing, subsidies, controls, research, purchasing, a businessman has to deal constantly with government. There is also a need of government to obtain the viewpoint of industry. There is not a day in the year that some government department or other is not negotiating with industry, looking for information as to the state of business.

"Businessmen who do not belong to the trade associations of their industry, owe it to themselves to find out just what the association is doing and whether they could not help to do the job better. None of us can disassociate ourselves from our industry. Our reputation is inextricably tied to the general reputation of our profession.

"Furthermore in a country with so many regional interests and with so many nationalities isn't it possible that the meeting of people in the same trades, the holding of conventions in different parts of the country, the teaming and working together is a major influence working towards national unity.

"Why do we have trade associations such as the Institute? What is it set up to do? The best answer we have found to these questions in our humble opinion is: for my money, the whole idea, the whole philosophy of a trade association can be summed up in these words, 'people working together.' Business has found that the collective intelligence of a group is greater than the intelligence of any one of the individuals. Unity of action will carry an industry farther than almost any amount of individual effort.

"Disraeli once said, 'The more extensive a man's knowledge of what has been done, the greater will be his power of knowing what to do.'

"From my own experiences, aside from any benefits to my company or my industry, the personal satisfaction I have gotten from association work was reward enough. I have many lifelong friends in the industry in all parts of the country I learned that my competitors were not the scoundrels I thought they once were. I find I like most of them. I have a better understanding of my industry and its importance to the national economy.

"An editorial in a recent issue of *Printers Ink* ended on this note: 'Trade associations can, if they will be strong progressive forces. If they are not, they invite their own destruction, and if they fall, they may bring down the house of free enterprise.'

"There is still another reason for the existence and activity of trade associations. They are a part of a great experiment in democracy, a bulwark against government regulations and dictatorship, a protector of our free enterprise system. To preserve that freedom of enterprise we must work together.

"Trade association activity, then considered in its broadest aspects, makes for more intelligent production, distribution, and selling and brings us closer to our goal of more things for more people.

I spent a very wonderful year as president of A.A.I. I got better acquainted with a lot of people in the industry and many of them have become life long friends. In my final Presidential message through the A.A.I. News I said

"Although the past year has not been rich in profits, it has been rich in friendships, rich in associations with my fellow members of the Institute

and rich in the memories of the wonderful experience of being your President the past year. To all of you who have helped I can only say, 'Thank you.'

At the next convention General Ralph Wooten was elected our next President. He had been our main guiding light since our inception and made a great President. Just before my term of Presidency, Jack Criswell was hired as our executive Vice-President who had a lot of trade association experience and he did a wonderful job. Mona Jennings who had been executive Secretary from the beginning up to that time, resigned. She did a wonderful job from the beginning. During my administration Jack got the Institute rolling and our membership rose to eight hundred (800) dues paying members. Our conventions began making big money and eventually we opened up three bank savings account of 80,000 dollars. Fred Stewart from California was elected President in 1957 and Paul Duesterhaus from Quincy, Ill. was elected President in 1958.

Jack had one weakness and that was drink. I had helped him to keep himself straight for a long time. After Duesterhaus' administration Jack was fired. The next President did nothing to help Jack, in fact he was the one who fired him. The next executive Vice-President was a flat failure and the one who followed him was more interested in the savings the Institute had in the bank and demanded an exorbitant salary. By 1962 the membership had fallen off drastically, the convention and trade show were poorly attended, their savings account about gone so they decided to merge with the Fertilizer Food Council. After they did that they, of course, lost their identity.

In my experience I had never met so fine a bunch of men in all my life. They were most unselfish and were willing to help you. Two who stand out above all the rest were Thad Fowler of Hattiesburg, Miss., and Harold Howe of Chicago. The following is a letter I wrote to Lewis Fowler after his father's death:

Mr. Lewis Fowler  
Mississippi Tank Co.  
Hattiesburg, Mississippi

Dear Lewis:

"Received your box of pears and thank you very much. They are my favorite fruit.

"Your Christmas gift recalls many happy relationships that I have enjoyed over the years with you, your father and your Company. In my experience in the Fertilizer industry two men stand out from all the rest, namely your Father and Harold Howe of the Howe Lee Machine Co. Both of them I admired very much for what they were and what they stood for. Both of them were felled by a heart attack and I miss them both very much.

"Your father especially had one of the most wonderful personalities that any person could have had. I recall the last visit Bee and I had with him and your Mother. We had a most wonderful day in New Orleans and a day at the farm. The day at the farm was most revealing for the character of your Father stood out so very much. They were putting up hay, dipping cattle, and remodeling an old shed. His enthusiasm for what was going on was more than his heart could and would eventually stand and I told him so at that time.

"But that was Thad Fowler. He couldn't help it he couldn't be any different for it was his nature. Whatever he did, whether it was in business, sports or pleasure he made a game of it and played it to the hilt.

"He had the rare faculty of instilling confidence in his friends for what he had to say and did and the knack of drawing people closer to him. No son could have had a more wonderful Father and I know you must miss his guidance and council.

"Give your Mother, Bee and my regards and affection. George sends along his thanks too for the pears and thanks again for mine."

Sincerely yours,  
M. C. CRAFT

The following reply was received:

Mr. M. C. CRAFT  
Great Northern Equipment Co.  
236 East Union Street  
Springfield, Illinois



Dear Mr. CRAFT:

"Why do not more of us stop, as you did and take the time to tell a friend the warm thoughts that are in our hearts and minds? I am sure that I have other friends from whom I have not heard that had the same good feeling for my Daddy. But they did not, as you did, stop and take the time and tell me so. That you did sets you apart and is an example of the reason my Daddy held you in such high esteem. In him you had a real friend who admired greatly the good qualities you possess. Your letter means more to me than you might imagine. Thank you very much.

"I'm glad the pears reached you and George in good shape. They carry with them our best wishes that each of you will enjoy a prosperous and Happy New Year.

"Mother joins me in sending our warmest personal regards to you and Mrs. Craft. Take good care of yourselves and I hope that during this year we might get in a nice visit either here or there."

Sincerely yours,  
T. Lewis Fowler, Jr.

As I stated before we started out with a nineteen car contract with the Spencer Chemical Co. This was increased to twenty-seven cars the next year. They were the most dependable Company I ever did business with. They set up a schedule of delivery and performed by it 1007c. Mr. Joe Culpepper was their Vice-President and Sales Manager. The following is a letter I received from him after I sent him a little Christmas remembrance:

Mr. Mark CRAFT  
236 Union Street  
Springfield, Illinois

Dear Mr. CRAFT:

"One of the grandest things for me about the Holiday season is to be remembered by good friends, Often during the festive times of the past few days I have had called to my attention again and again the overwhelming importance of friendship and association with good people like you. High on the list of any enumeration of the short comings of mortal being would undoubtedly be the item of taking our friends for granted. In your case however, you have learned to express warmth and friendliness in a way that draws your friends closer and closer to you."

"Many thanks for the attractive and useful brush which arrived a few days prior to Dec. 25. It has contributed to our enjoyment of the Holidays. Even more important to me and my family is the assurance and reassurance of the continuing friendship and good wishes of your continuing friendship and good wishes. This is truly important."

"Thank you very much for the copy of the Ammonia News. All of us here at Spencer Chemical Co. are happy to see such a good friend as you win professional recognition in being elected President of the Institute. You have our most hearty congratulations and very best wishes. It is no surprise to me that your personality and leadership abilities have been recognized.

"My very best for all that is good in health, happiness and prosperity in the New Year ahead.

"Warmest personal regards."

Cordially yours,  
Joe Culpepper

As I have related before I had ordered 70,000 dollars worth of tanks. George wanted to know where we were going to get the ammonia to put in them. I told him I always found out if you were prepared when the opportunity came along you could take advantage of it. Along in November a gentleman from Mathieson Chemical Co., Baltimore, Maryland, came calling to find out how much ammonia storage we had. I was very glad. He said his company was reactivating the government ammonia plant in Morgantown, West Virginia. I asked him when the report would reach Baltimore. He said not later than Monday. I took a plane to Baltimore and arrived just as they were moving the sales manager, Joe Whittington's desk into his office. I left there with a promise of 75 cars of ammonia. Whittington delivered sixty-eight of them. He was a liar, I had to keep after him and he told me if I didn't like the way his company was treating me to get my ammonia somewhere else. On account of the shortage of ammonia this was impossible. In the fall he wanted to know how much ammonia I wanted for next season and I told him a hundred cars. By November I called Joe and he said he was getting around to writing a contract. Clyde Marshall who worked for Commercial Solvents Corp. called me about that time and said he would have some extra ammonia so he wrote me a contract. Whittington called in late December and he said he was ready to write me a contract so I told him I didn't like the way he treated us and we were getting our ammonia somewhere else.

The tanks that we purchased were due to be delivered. I needed an extra 30,000 dollars to pay for them so I told Mr. John Northup of our needs. He asked me if I knew what I was doing in the ammonia business and I said who does but I had also come out very good. I told him I had contracts for 102 cars of ammonia and we would make at least 1000 dollars a car. He turned me down so I flew to Cleveland and was able to get the money. I owed the bank 20,000 dollars and he thought as long as I had to give a chattel mortgage for the new loan they were entitled to some security. He took a

mortgage on my home and on a 95 acre farm west of Springfield. He made out a contract that I was to pay 2000 dollars every six month plus interest. I told him I didn't want a contract that long as I could pay it off in three months. He said that that was the way the loan committee wanted it. In three months I went in to pay the bank off and he said the loan wasn't made that way. I hit the ceiling and said this is the first time I ever went into a bank and forced them to let me pay them off. You could have heard me all over the bank. He said to wait a minute and he would talk to the loan committee and they decided to take the payment. Northup who was listening to Professor Baer of the University of Illinois who was giving ammonia a black eye. I had been doing business with the Marine Bank for several years and had always made my obligations good and didn't deserve this kind of treatment. I went over to the First National Bank, talked to Bill Cutler and he told me to come on over. Ever since then they have treated me wonderfully and I was able to borrow any amount of money I needed. Mr. Cutler passed on and Mr. Bill Etz, Jr., took his place and I have been treated the best.

We finally had our ammonia business built up to fifteen storage locations. The ammonia manufacturing was increasing and getting out of hand. I knew the profit angle would be slipping so decided to sell out. Each one of these locations we had taken in a partner on a 50-50 basis. We called them all into a dinner meeting and told them of our decision and offered them the plants at our cost plus 500 dollars. Most of them were able to raise the money. We were offered quite a bit more but they all would still be our customers as we had since the very beginning sold equipment valves, fittings, etc. In 1951 we organized The Great Northern Equipment Co. with three partners as owners, George Schmidt, Norman Mountz and myself. We had a contract with the John Blue Co. of Huntsville, Alabama for their application equipment. It was the top application equipment in the field and our volume was very large. The Blue Company was much to be desired, they tried to cut our territory down which we wouldn't stand for. We finally quit them and started to manufacture our own equipment. The industry was in a recession and profits were declining. I backed Norman and Frank Sloan in a hide operation in Phoenix, Arizona. After about nine months they were broke and I had to take over with Norman running it. After several months I sold out to our competitor in Phoenix and Norman went to work for them. After a time he and another employee of the hide company took over, increased their operation, got into the rendering business and made a lot of money. To my regret Norman had a heart attack and passed away in May, 1974. He was an associate that I admired very much, George Schmidt was another. Norman had a fine family consisting of his wife Joan and three children. Upon his passing I wrote his wife the following letter:

Mrs. Joan Mountz  
5225 Road Runner Road  
Scottsdale, Arizona

My dear Joan:

"Bee and I were both shocked at Norman's passing. I couldn't refrain from writing you a note of condolence. In my business experience Norman stands out as one of the finest men that I have had the pleasure of being

associated with. He had the faculty of drawing his friends closer to him, creating confidence by his honesty and integrity not only in business but in every day walks of life. Sorry we couldn't get out to the funeral.

"I know you had a beautiful life together sharing the hardships of your earlier days in Phoenix and the more bountiful recent years. I know that he loved you and the children dearly and that you returned it with the same devotion only a good wife can. Really that is all that matters."

M. C. CRAFT

We received a wonderful reply in return:

"Dear Bee and Mark,

"Mark, Melody and Chris join me in thanking you for your dear phone call and the gorgeous long stem red roses. I will always treasure your letter, I have read it many times.

"I know Norman felt toward you almost as a son would toward a father except that he was able to learn more from you because you weren't. You had a wonderful influence on his and our lives-not just learning to do business but learning how to live our lives. You would have been proud to have seen the church as full as if it were Christmas, from the President of the bank to all the black men from the office with tears streaming. The Minister who had been his great good friend for so long-and they went round and round over the racial issue-flew in from California where he had been transferred and it was a comfort to have one who knew him so well

"I am so very glad we were all able to have lunch together in January and the fun trip to Hawaii. Nothing can take away the love and the memories."

Love always,  
JoAnn Mountz

The Great Northern Equipment Co. had quite an experience with the flame cultivator. This is a cultivator that is powered by liquefied Petroleum gas to burn weeds out of the cornfields. A salesman, Jimmy Charton, for the Arkansas Foundry Company put on a demonstration of how it worked with a ten dollar bill in how it could be controlled and not burn up the bill. This was in 1956. We ordered one and Charton came and put on another demonstration before a group of dealers. Also Dick Pardee a manufacturers representative was one of those present. It looked very good and Dick came to work for us. The cultivator was getting good publicity. Dick and I Went to the L.P. Convention trade show in Chicago and we sold a great number of Cultivators. It looked so good I went to Little Rock, Arkansas and obtained an eight State territory. We

established two branch houses; in Mason City, Iowa and Ft. Wayne, Indiana. We rented warehouses in each city and appointed a manager for each and stocked the warehouses with fertilizer and L.P. equipment. The Company invited our personnel down to Little Rock to a meeting of all their dealers over the United States. There were dealers there from the south where the flame cultivator had been accepted. The L.P. dealers needed a summer load and this looked like it. Mr. Joe Schmeltzer was the manager and the Company was owned by the Brown Brothers.

Our success with the flame cultivator was short lived. Our customers couldn't keep the burners lit. We took it up with the foundry and they said they had had such a success in the south they didn't see why we were having trouble. They sent Charton up but he couldn't solve the problem as corn is a lot taller than cotton and this density just wasn't enough oxygen down by the ground to keep the burners lit. The Company didn't make any effort to solve our problem. Dick Pardee designed a new burner with a tunnel about three feet long attached to the burner which sucked air from above ground. It seemed to about solve our problem but not quite. Anyway we thought enough of it to spend a thousand dollars getting a patent on it. About this time the chemical companies were having success with their pesticides for control of weeds and as we couldn't keep the burners lit with any assured success the flame cultivator faded out of the picture. All was not lost, however, for Dick Pardee stayed on with us and developed the truck rig for spreading liquid fertilizer through a pump mounted beside a tank on a truck. Liquid fertilizer had taken the place of anhydrous ammonia to a certain extent as it was a complete fertilizer only you were not able to get enough ammonia in the mix and they still had to apply it separately.

After the first world war in 1920, we had a slump in farm products which didn't recover until after the depression 1929-32. My Father had a real tough time. In his earlier career he made it a practice to buy a farm, pay as little down as possible and as he made money instead of paying off the indebtedness he bought another farm. Consequently after buying about 1200 acres over the years he was heavily in debt. Of course during the first world war he made good money. After the war land went up and he bought the 235 acre Edie farm and the Maquon farm. After the crash 1929 prices including farm land fell and he was financially in bad shape. He struggled along kept his taxes paid up on the land but was unable to meet his interest payments. For about three years he paid what he could. He and Mother were working their hearts out for a lost cause. When I left the farm in 1925 we invoiced the livestock and equipment for my one-half at 5500 dollars. Finally I asked my Dad when he was going to start paying me for I had had no interest paid on my note for three years. He said he thought I would be the last to ask him. I said I would but he was paying some others and why not me.

I made him a proposition. If he would give me the little money that he was making to invest for him, I would tear up the note and he would never have to pay it. First I had him tell his creditors that he wished them to take over the farms as he couldn't pay them anymore. They all refused, told him to keep running the farms and they would wait for a better day. The first year he had 3000 dollars about the same the second and third years. He saw a 160 acre farm up by Rio, Ill. that he wanted me to buy. I had invested his money in government bonds and they yielded some interest. I bought the farm and in a year we sold it and made 5000 dollars on it. Then he saw a farm down by Douglas, Ill. that he had me buy. The creditors were very unhappy. Dad had borrowed

18,000 dollars from an individual when he bought the Edie farm. This creditor had died and three of his sons had inherited the mortgage. They came to me and asked me if I could not buy the mortgage for 12,000 dollars including all back interest. I told Dad about it and told him to see if T.M. Cox, a wealthy life long friend would loan him 4500 dollars, I would see if Mr. Custer and Nirdlinger of the Galesburg National Bank would loan me 4500. All of these fine men agreed to help us. We offered 9000 dollars for the mortgage and was accepted. Thus Dad and Mother were on their way back as they had paid 48,000 dollars for this farm back in 1919. After the depression farm prices began to come back and Dad paid off this 9000 dollars, the balance on the Douglass farm and in the meantime bought two small farms of 250 acres near Vermont and paid for them. In 1947, he told Madelene, Edwin and myself if we would pay the gift tax he would deed the land to us provided we would give he and Mother the income from the land as long as either one of them lived. He divided the land up into three equal parts and told us to decide who got what. I said to Madelene that we both knew that Edwin wanted the Edie farm which she agreed. I told her of the two Vermont farms and the Douglass farm she could have her choice. She chose the Vermont farms. If I had had my first choice I would have chosen the Douglass farm so everyone was completely satisfied. In 1950, Dad died. His was quite a success story for at 65 years of age he was broke but left 20 years later a quarter of a million dollars.

During the 1940's times were good. We had a good volume of wool business, a million pounds a year. We had a broker selling for us Svatik Brothers in Chicago and Jim Lucas in Boston. In 1943, the government took over buying the wool and Svatiks dropped out of it. We stayed with Lucas the next year, Svatiks came back in the following year and made it rough. Lucas went to hell and stuck us for about 10,000 dollars so I went to Boston to find another wool broker. I was referred to Vetter and Williams a young team and they did us a wonderful job. The wool business was a tricky business. When the market was good it was no trouble to sell, but when it turned dull you couldn't get a price for love or money. You just had to wait until they wanted it again. Sometimes it would take months and by that time you were sick looking at it and when it turned around and was getting hot someone would pick you off and all your waiting for nothing. I told Vetter I wanted him to sell my wool on a brokerage. I told him if they did I would pay them one cent. He claimed after the first sale and on the next sale the mill would come to me direct. I told him if they did and I made a sale I would still pay them the one cent brokerage. They were right. On the next sale this mill offered them 35 cents per pound. The mill called me and offered 36 cents direct. I sold to the mill but paid the brokerage of one cent to Vetter and Williams. This proved to them that I was loyal and meant what I said. We had several years of mutual good business together. The independent mills kept getting less and less so their brokerage business came to an end. Vetter came west to Rochester, Minnesota where we did business as long as we were in the wool business. In 1959, I retired from the Hide and Wool business, leased my building to Merle Delph. We took a boat trip to Europe to visit Frederick who was stationed in the Air force at Frankfort, Germany. We first went to Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Then to Frankfort, Germany for several days with Frederick and his family. After that we got in his car and went through Southern Germany, Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, Austria and back to Frankfort. From there we flew to Paris and

then London to take the boat home. We were mighty glad to see the Statue of Liberty in the New York Harbor.

We continued to operate the Great Northern Equipment Co. but were not setting the world on fire with our manufacturing. We made the mistake, which I knew was a mistake, staying with the John Blue Co. and building them up instead of our own equipment business. We were making plant ammonia storage installations all over the United States. I would go ahead and start an installation, put in the footings and the piers out of concrete and three weeks later George Schmidt would come along, set the tank on the piers build the compressor house, do the piping and electrical work to finish the installation. In the late 50's I had hired a young bookkeeper by the name of Joe Mileham. He was a very sharp young man who took to the Fertilizer business very readily. We paid him 10,000 dollars a year and he was actually running the business, especially the office and inside. George was doing most of the selling and outside work. We put a lot of confidence in Joe and trusted him completely much to our sorrow. In 1963, I bought a lot and started to build a house. It took me two years for I kept up my outside work with the Great Northern in the storage plant installations. I did a lot for Joe, got him elected to the Springfield Rotary Club and elected to the Board of Directors of the Institute. He wanted to spend too much time in Memphis which I knew wasn't necessary and I refused to let him go. He said he was going anyway so I fired him. Alberta Hines, George's daughter, took over the bookkeeping. Before we had fired him the irregularities of Joe came out. We confronted him with it and he admitted it. Over the years, we sold him about 30,000 dollars worth of Great Northern Stock on yearly payments. He had paid about 10,000 dollars on it. He paid us back 40,000 dollars besides losing the stock and the equity it represented.

In 1968, the 10 year lease on my building was coming to an end. Merle Delph sold his hide business after operating it for 5 years, to National By-Products of Des Moines, Iowa. I had sold my one-half interest in the Galesburg Rendering business to Merle Delph in about 1946. He and several other men along with Art Faber sold National their rendering interest in Illinois in the deal with the hide business. National notified me that they did not want to renew the lease. National finished out the five years remaining on the Delph lease and were building a new Hide plant in Galesburg. I told National they were making a mistake as I could not rent the building to any advantage only as a Hide House and would have to go back in the hide business. When they moved out, I installed a race way for curing hides and started in again. I took Constantino Packing Co., Springfield Packing Co. both of Springfield and McCabe Packing Co. from Taylorville away from them.

There was quite a change in the hide business with the raceway curing. It consisted of a concrete tank 40' long and 20' wide and 5' deep. There was an island in the middle about 4' wide. There were two paddle wheels, one mounted on each side that kept the salt brine flowing in the same direction long enough to cure the hides in about 14 hours. The tank would hold about 450 hides. At one end of the tank was a wringer which we put hides thru, put them in piles of about 150, let them drain further over night, rolled and tied them the next day. This system kept us from having large inventories as it cut the curing time by two to four weeks.

I have always enjoyed the hide business but one bad thing that bothered me was the labor union I had to put up with. There is no cooperation coming from their business

agents and their plan is you do it or else. I put up with it as long as I could and this is the main reason I decided to quit. I was also going on my eightieth year, it gets harder to keep track of things and your memory begins to slip badly. The men in the hide department didn't need a union to get their fair share of wages, for we had no union in Great Northern and they were always satisfied.

The manufacturing and sales of Equipment was getting to be more of a problem each passing year. We were living on our reputation from the past, although George was about four years my junior, we decided to quit. George is one of the finest men that I have had the pleasure of being associated with. Easy to get along with, cooperative in every way. In any differences we had he would state his views and his logic was such that you couldn't help, in most cases, agreeing with him. He understood the workings of Ammonia and was a good salesman. He sold himself first and of course the sale would follow.

Two young men, Dale Deverman and Floyd Pettit who worked for Precision Tank Company of Virginia, Illinois, bought our stock in Great Northern along with nine other men and took over on July 1, 1974. George agreed to stay on until they got their feet on the ground and learned a lot of the details.

In 1944, I joined the Rotary Club a Service Club that met every Monday evening for dinner and heard a good talk from some one in industry. I got George elected to membership also. I met some mighty fine men who were leaders in their trades and professions. One member was J. E. (Gene) Hemmick who was retired and 92 years old. The last few years of his life he called on each member on his birthday and wishing him happiness and reciting an original poem suitable for the occasion. On his 92nd Birthday he recited:

### GROWING OLD

"In truth growing old is a beautiful thing  
Like picking in Autumn the flower of Spring  
Our Limbs may be weak and our hair turned white  
but down in our souls there is warm delight  
for under the walls of sun-lit slope  
there blossoms a poesy we all call hope  
And the years roll away but this hope holds on  
and memory oft pictures a joy long gone  
For its blending the Autumn with young bright Spring  
that makes growing old a beautiful thing."

"For this life we live is a garden,  
our good friends the flowers  
Lives happiest hours and friendship like flowers  
Bloom evermore fair.

"When loving tendered by our good friends who care  
and lifes beautiful garden would be sweeter by far  
If all who pass through it was as nice as you all are.



"And what a wonderful thing is life's Autumn  
when the leaves of the tree have turned gold  
when God fills each days as he sends it  
with memories priceless and old.

"When a treasure house filled with rare jewels  
are the friendships of year upon year  
and my prayer is that this birthday may bring us all  
a bountiful measure of good cheer.

"For I live for those who love me  
for those who know me true  
for the heaven that smiles above me  
for the cause that needs assistance  
for the wrongs that need resistance  
for the future in the distance  
for the good that I can do."

Over the past fifty years I have done business with a lot of wonderful men. I have mentioned Durr Vetter who sold my wool for me. When he heard that I had retired he wrote me the following letter.

September 2, 1974

Dear Mark:

"First, I want to congratulate you on the continued success you have had thru all the years. It certainly shows what a man can still do if he is not afraid of hard work, imagination and a big code of business ethics. Both John Skinner and I appreciate what you were and shall never forget what a true friend you were to us

"Last May 29th, I became old enough to join the "club" but I'm not going to retire until I'm forced to do so. As you know I have always enjoyed my work and even though it has become more difficult I still make a good living with fewer customers each year. I only wish it was possible to do something in Illinois for I miss visiting with you.

"Someday I shall make it a point to run down and spend an evening with you and Bee. I hope it won't be necessary for either of you good friends to seek medical care, but if you do remember Alizabeth and I live in the shadow of the Mayo Clinic. If that should come to pass remember our home is wide open to you both.

"Again Alizabeth joins me in sending every best wish to you and Bee for many years in your much deserved retirement.

Sincerely your friend,  
Durr Vetter

I would like to mention a few of the other loyal friends that we have had the pleasure and privilege of selling our hides to and through. Kurt Friend and his Father-in-law, J. Greenebaum who we sold a world of horsehides. Leo Minner of St. Louis who's Council I cherished very much. Charles Wenzel of Sands and Leckie in Boston, Frank Pilchard and Porter Russell of George H. Elliott Co. of Chicago. Lavine Bros., Toronto, Canada, Aaron Bassen of Frank J. Schwab Association, New York City, and Eugene Sword of Versailles, Ill. All these men were of the highest order, when they told you something you could depend on it and their word was good which made doing business with them a pleasure. Of course there were numerous others a lot of them on the slippery side to outright crooked, so I won't mention their names. On the other side loyal customers that we bought Hides and Fur from: Constantino Packing Co, Springfield, Quality Beef, Joe McCabe of Taylorville, Don Campbell of Mattoon, Ill., Callihan Packing Co., Peoria, Ill., Duquoin Packing Co., Foster Fur Co. of Lovington, Ill., Grant Groenewald of Foreston, Ill., Schnowski Brothers of Cambridge, Ill., Tri-City Rendering Co. of Moline, Ill. Fred Bislinghoff of Peoria, Ill., I and Carl Will of St. Louis, Hummelstein Brothers of Jonesboro, Ark. There were many others that I cannot recall but these are the main loyal ones.

Of the loyal and true employees that I had first was Ben Williams who was with me for 40 years until he passed on in 1973. The next was Freddie Morse who worked out of Springfield from 1936 until 1945 when he passed away. Bill Hughes who started to work in 1942 and worked until I rented my warehouse in 1959. He passed away in 1964. Jesse Smith who worked in Galesburg from 1936 to 1943 when he passed away. George Schoettle who was manager of the Rendering Plant at Butler who was my brother-in-law did a wonderful job along with his wife Agnes. They moved to Springfield after we sold the Plant at Butler. He died in 1954. John Richard who had charge of the Horse slaughtering operation and Jack Rouse, Betty's husband who came to work in Springfield after his discharge from the Airforce after World War II. He came to learn the business but after he worked awhile he came to me and asked me if we always worked this way as we were putting in about 12 hours a day. I told him not always, but during the wool season we had to. He quit and said it wasn't worth it. Jim Bruce worked in the Hides and was able to get the maximum work out of the Hide Crew which I appreciated. I cannot forget the five people who worked for the Great Northern Equipment Co.: Alberta Hines and Joyce Munstock in the office; Tony Keller as Foreman of the production department; Clarence Wormath who had charge of the Parts department and Elmer Knave who was our Technical man. All of these employees were loyal, hard working and made it a little easier in all our operations.

Jack ROUSE married my step-daughter Betty Lou MILLER in Dec., 1941. To this union were born Michael and Bonnie Sue. Bonnie was a very sweet cute little girl. She was a little pigeon-toed. I used to tell her, "You're the only one in the family that isn't pigeon-toed and you're a little bit." She would say to her grandmother, "MaMa Bee I'm not a little bit, I'm a big bit."

As I stated before Father died in 1950, the first of my immediate family to die. Madeline's son Robert died of Infantile Paralysis in 1951, Madeline died in 1952 of Diabetes and Mother died of old age at 87. Dad was 85. George SCHOETTLE, Bee's sister Agnes's husband, died in 1954. My brother Edwin died in 1962 of a Cerebral Hemorrhage. Bee's three brothers, James, Wesley and Harry died between 1950 and 1960. Her sister Agnes SCHOETTLE and brother Ben Marcus still survives.

The hardest on me was the death of my daughter, Marcia which happened Oct. 8, 1973. She had cancer, we had just been to Detroit to see her when she passed away suddenly. Another sad part of it was she had lost her husband Carl to Cancer about four years before. It broke up her family as she left four children with the youngest 11 years. Bradley was thru college, Mark and Luann in college and Lee in grade school. Lee went to live with his Aunt Annabelle. This was the hardest because she was a part of me.

Annabelle and Arthur MOSS were married Sept. 7, 1946. To them were born Nichola, Dec. 25, 1947; Claudia, Sept 5, 1959 and Marcia, May 11, 1956. Nichola married Robert WAGSTAFF to them were born one son Ian. Claudia married Bruce MILYARD Oct. 1967. Two girls Kistinn, May 22, 1967 and Nikki, Nov. 4, 1970. Claudia divorced Bruce Jan 3, 1974 and married Ralph DIFIORE, May 1974.

Marcia and Carl WALDREP were married Mar. 18, 1950. To them were born Bradley Lloyd, May 28, 1951, Mark Davis, Mar. 21, 1953, Luann Lyle, May 1, 1955 and Lee William, Jan. 21, 1962. Carl died with Cancer July 8, 1968.

Gail Ann married Jerry Tice PARKER in Springfield Aug. 17, 1956. To them were born Marcus Monroe, Mar. 23, 1958, Lisa Ann, Mar. 8, 1960, Laura Gail Aug. 2, 1962, Angela Sue, Feb. 22, 1964, and Sara Elizabeth, July 27, 1967.

I mentioned before that after I leased my Warehouse I bought a lot out in Linsay Place and started to build a nice home. I started it in 1963 and finished it in 1965. I hired Ernie Schultz, a carpenter and a helper and started in. Bee and I had our ideas about what we wanted in a house. Above all she wanted a nice kitchen. I wanted a split-shake cedar shingle roof and a veneer Bedford stone outside, and a peg imitation hardwood oak floor, pecky cypress wall paneling in the family room and thermalpane windows throughout. I hired a plumber to do the plumbing and heating and a plasterer to do the plastering. One of the men from the plant did the wiring and the air-conditioning. Ernie, the helper, and I did all the rest, carpenter work, laying the stone and concrete decorative cornicework and the ceiling decorations. It is a beautiful home and very comfortable.

The one wonderful thing and honor in my life has been my membership in my College Fraternity, Phi Delta Theta. I have many lifelong friends and the honor that has been to be a Phi Delt is more than I can explain to you.

I have contributed financially to their cause over the years. In 1951 I established the Craft Scholarship of 10,000 dollars at Knox College, the income to be granted to a Sophomore Phi Delt each year who needed financial assistance. I have also contributed toward the upkeep of the chapter house on Campus.

I wrote Max Goodsill who is a member of Beta Theta Pi Fraternity and who is in charge of the Fifty Year Alumni Club of Knox and Lombard Colleges that I intended to attend the 1975 Phi Delta Theta Founders Day Banquet and that I would drop in to see him for a little visit about 4:00 in the afternoon.

I received the following letter:

April 1, 1975

Dear Mark:

"I will be very glad to see you Wednesday. The Phi Delta Theta fire must still be plenty hot in your veins to come all the way from Springfield for the Chapter banquet. This is the loyalty and enthusiasm it takes these days to make life worthwhile."

Cordially,  
Max

Goodsill

The weather turned so bad with the freezing rain, sleet and snow that I was not able to make the trip. I called Jim Lillie and told him I would not attempt it and would he please call Max for me. I also wrote Max expressing my disappointment. I received the nice letter from him on the 19th.

Dear Mark:

"The storm did wreck our appointment. You were sensible not to undertake the drive from Springfield. I was out in the storm for a couple of hours and ready to destroy a few cocktails with you before the Phi Delta Theta dinner, but Jim Lillie did call. He is a very dependable guy as his Dad was before him.

"Your affectionate references to your fraternity strikes a responsive chord with me. Social and other extra-curricular meant a lot and colleges today would be turning out better qualified graduates of this generation had the advantage of fewer textbook and class lectures, and more club meetings where ideas are swapped and argued, projects and mischief planned, etc. Look over your gales and count the student operated activities, publications, dramatics, athletics, politics, hayrides, proms, picnics, etc., etc. where you make your friends and learn how to get along.

"You had a continuously strong chapter full of clean able young men in Phi Delta Theta, and if you think about their business and professional records it's amazing that Knox could turn out so many winners and very liberal donors to Knox College. The Phi Delt Chapter today is the best on Campus and this is largely due to interest of Alumni."

Sincerely,  
Max

At the 1975 Founders Day Banquet of the Phi Delt's Paul Zucker was elected and awarded the Craft Scholarship. The Knox College President Inman Fox notified Paul of the award and added that he was confident that you will continue to perform in a manner to bring credit to yourself, the chapter and the College. I received the following thank you letter from Paul which was outstanding:

April 24, 1975

Dear Mr. CRAFT:

"It was quite an honor, to say the least, being chosen as the 1975 winner of the Marcus C. Craft Scholarship Award. I must say that I was rather shocked to receive such a presentation and wished that you had been there, not only to enable me to express my gratitude in person, but so you could have seen the look on my face. That evening was a very special one for me, not only because of the award, but because of the occasion (Founder's Day) and its reason. It reinforced the idea that being a member of a fraternity is not something that you experience for a mere four years, but something that stays with you for the rest of your life. Being a Phikeia, I have not been able to experience the "All of fraternity life", nonetheless in the years to come I hope I can find some of the meaning that you obviously have, expressed in your recent letter to the chapter, for which I am to extend the thanks of all the members. Hopefully, one day I will have the opportunity to meet you, perhaps at a meeting of the chapter or at next years Founder's Day gathering. Until then, I must thank you once again, by letter, for one of the biggest thrills of my life."

Most Sincerely,  
Paul Zucker

In 1974, I gave Knox College 20,000 dollars to buy me an annuity which pays an annuity to me each year until I die, then to pay off the mortgage on the Fraternity House. The following is an article in the Knox Student Weekly Paper concerning the gift:

#### \$24,000 FOR PHI DELTS

"Knox College alumnus M. C. Craft recently notified college officials and the officers of the Phi Delta Theta fraternity of a 4,000 dollar outright gift toward the Phi Delt mortgage on their house and an additional annuity contract of \$20,000. The annuity contract stipulated payments in equal quarterly installments and shall be used for investment purposes by the college. After a period of time both contributions shall be applied toward retiring the mortgage balance on the fraternity house, and amount of the annuity remaining shall then be placed in a fund for capital improvements on the Phi Delta Theta house.

" Craft, a resident of Springfield, Illinois, expressed a desire to support the work of the college in making the charitable gift. A scholarship fund in Craft 's name has already been established at Knox College and is used to provide financial aid to sons and daughters of Phi Delta Theta alumni of the college.

"Best known as a staunch conservative, Craft has been an influential and dedicated alumnus. A graduate in the class of 1918 he made his start as a buyer of Hides and Wool in Galesburg. He is now the part owner of the Great Northern Equipment Co. and in the past has served as President of the Agricultural Ammonia Institute.

"Through Craft contributions, the Illinois Delta-Zeta Chapter of Phi Delta Theta claims one of the strongest financial bases of Knox College fraternities. Knox College at present has six fraternities and three sororities, whose membership includes over a quarter of the student body."

Jim Lillie has been advisor and guardian of the chapter at Knox since his graduation and what a marvelous job he has done over the years. Each year he has a new set of officers to see that the records are set straight their finances kept up in order, and their moral behavior is above reproach. I commend him for a job well done and I for one appreciate his wonderful dedication.

Upon hearing of my donation he wrote me the following letter:

Jan. 13, 1975

Mr. Marcus C. Craft  
2132 Cherry Road  
Springfield, Illinois.

Dear Marcus,

"On my return from a visit to my daughter's home in Denver, I learned of your gift to Knox and Phi Delta Theta. I wish to express my heart felt thanks for your more than generous support of Phi Delta Theta in this gift and throughout the previous years. I wish there were more people in this world like you, I would be if I had the money but as of now all I can expend is time and I enjoy it.

"This will put us in the position of seeing the light at the end of the financial tunnel and be in the position of owing nothing as we were when on North Kellogg St. before the forced move to near the campus.

Again my many thanks."

Yours in the bond,  
Jim Lillie

Jim has had the worry of where the money is coming from when the house needs repairs or a new roof and the usual yearly payments to the college.

In 1968, I met with several Phi Delt's in my home to organize the "Lincoln Land Phi Delta Theta Alumni Club". I had seen a lot of good young men going on to college that Phi Delta Theta was missing and I wanted to do something about it. Also, I wanted to meet the Phi Deltas in the area and that has come to pass much to my pleasure. I was its first President, Bill Montague was the second and Don Kramer is the third.

We held a cocktail party in our home Oct. 11, 1974 and I received from Don the following letter:

Dear Mark,

"Many thanks to you and Bee for your warm hospitality of last Friday evening. I think that a good time was had by all. It was particularly nice to see the delegation from Galesburg and I know that it was in appreciation for the support that you have given that chapter over the years. "Of course, we also owe our existence as an alumni club to your continuing interest in Phi Delta Theta and for that we are all indebted to you.

"It was a particular pleasure for me to meet your classmate from Knox, Sam Harrington from Chicago. He was a most genial person and you are fortunate to have him for a friend. Please extend my best wishes to him on his 80th birthday which I understand was the past Monday.

"Again, it was good to see you and meet your son."

Yours in the bond,  
Don Kramer

At the Founders Day banquet of Phi Delta Theta of the Knox Chapter, Ralph Baxter a classmate of mine and myself in 1964 were inducted in the Golden Legion composed of Phi's of 50 years or more.

The next year I gave the address at the Founders Day Banquet and the following is part of that address:

"It gives me a great deal of pleasure to see such a fine turn out here tonight. There isn't anything I wouldn't do for Phi Delta Theta financially as far as I am able or promotional wise as I see my duty as an alumnus and would like to reminisce if you don't mind for I have a lot of pleasant memories and honors as far as Phi Delta Theta is concerned. I think the bright light of my life and one that I am extremely proud of was when I was asked to pledge back on Feb. 4, 1914. I was a senior in Galesburg High School and we seniors could observe the different Fraternities at Knox and Lombard Colleges and believe me Phi Delta Theta at both schools was the one that stood out from all the rest. Cap Elder and myself had been rushed by the three other National Fraternities at Knox. Finally



the invitation came and we were invited down to the house for dinner. This was Feb. 4,1914, and we pledged that night."

"Another proud moment was when my sister's son Craft Marks was pledged Phi Delt. Still another proud moment a year later my own son Frederick was pledged and I had the honor of pinning the sword and shield on his breast at his initiation. Back about ten years ago my eldest grandson Michael Rouse was entering the University of Wyoming. I did nothing about him for his other grandfather and Father belonged to a good National fraternity. I was very agreeably surprised when he called me to tell me that he had pledged Phi Delt. In his senior year he was elected Chapter President. This shows you that class will tell.

"Another proud moment when in 1966 I was presented with an appreciation plaque from the Knox College Phi Delta Theta Alumni Club. In 1968 the Chapter presented me with a plaque signed by all the officers of the Chapter, appreciating my financial support. I am not boasting of these facts only telling you how much I appreciated them. I have loved Phi Delta Theta all these years. It has been my pride and joy. The training that a freshman gets from his fraternity experience is something money cannot buy. When you come out of High School after your graduation you are cocky and think there just isn't much more for you to learn about the philosophy of life. After College gets underway you are lined up with the rest of the pledges and told what is wrong with you. And then comes Hell Week, the week before initiation. Those paddlings that hurt at the time but did you a world of good for it made you conscious of your fellow man and what this world is all about.

"Over the past few years what I have given to Knox I have seen that my beloved Fraternity get the benefit of my giving. The adverse thinking in the administrations of our higher Institutions of Learning against Fraternities compelled me to do this. After becoming initiated I began to realize what it was all about. The wonderful ceremony and the reading of the bond. What wonderful men our six founders were. The bond in its wording is to Phi Delta Theta what the Constitution is to the United States of America-Brotherly love and rectitude and friendship is the foundation of Phi Delta Theta. These six founders were either too far away from home or else could not afford to go home at Christmas time for Brotherly love brought them close together."

On June 7, 1974, I was inducted into the scroll of Honor for lifetime achievements of personal worth and service to others by the Fifty Year Alumni Club of Knox College. I had broken my pelvic bone by a fall at the Warehouse so I was not able to be present to receive it. My daughter, Gail was there to receive it for me.

An article in the Springfield State Journal-Register appeared giving cause for the honor. I received two congratulatory notes: One from Harold C. Hawkins, a Vice-President of the First National Bank of Springfield:

Dear Mr. CRAFT:

"On behalf of all of us here at the First National, we want to extend our congratulations to you on the honor that has been bestowed upon you by Knox College.

This honor could not have been bestowed upon a more deserving person."

Sincerely yours,  
Harold C. Hawkins

The other by George Ficke, Secretary and Treasurer of the Lincoln Land Phi Delta Theta Alumni Club:

Dear Mark:

"It's a pleasure to know a gentleman worthy of this high recognition from his Alma Mater. I'm sorry you missed the recent Phi Delt party on account of your fall. Hope to see you soon."

Yours in bond,  
George Ficke

I failed to mention my many friends in the fertilizer industry. There are many of them. Spending eight years on the Board of Directors of the Ammonia Institute brought me in contact with eight new men every year which adds to eighty. They were all fine men representing their industry from their section of the United States, just the best.

Life has been good to me, I enjoyed my business life, enjoyed good health and can count innumerable friends and those friends money cannot buy. Right not I have about everything I need that money can buy. But money cannot buy peace of mind or good luck and these I've always had. These things are for everybody not just me. Take it easy, enjoy yourself and don't press to hard and you will get your share of the breaks-just as I always have. It all hasn't been easy, years of hard work were involved. I prepared my life as I went along as much as I could so when what seemed like luck came my way I was able to take advantage of it. I cultivated and attracted good luck. I was willing and available when it turned up and undisturbed when it didn't. What you do in this life depends upon what you are and what you want, what you get in this life depends upon how much you are willing to work and plan and sacrifice and co-operate and use your resources.

I have always appreciated the greatness of America; the freedom, the free enterprise system that has allowed me to accumulate a little of the worldly goods so I could do some of the things I wanted to do. I have always been impressed with Her glory

and reflect that has been acquired by men who knew their duty and had the courage to do it. I am very much concerned about the way America is drifting toward socialism. If some of our great forefathers could come alive today they just wouldn't believe. When I hear the liberals especially the liberal politicians talk today, I don't believe they believe what they are saying. The liberal socialistic teachers in our High Schools and Colleges, the Press, Radio and Television Media are the greatest of influence toward this thinking, they are people who never made a dollar in their lifetime by the sweat of their brow nor appreciated the opportunities they have had. Most liberals that are wealthy come by their wealth through inheritance and don't appreciate or know what it means to work and sacrifice for what they have. As I look back I have lived through the greatest period in United States History. We may unite to overcome this tragedy of the liberals and maybe a Statesman like Washington or Lincoln may come along at the right time to save our country. I hope so, for my children, grandchildren and great grandchildren's sake for I want them to have the same opportunities that I have had. There are millions of people who have a deep love of America, a serious dedication to its ideals and an abiding faith in the kind of democracy that has made us great and will help to keep us that way.

"THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION" is the most glorious remarkable document ever framed by the Human Spirit and its unceasing search for freedom. For our sakes let us never take it for granted. The strength of its dictates are too deeply instilled in each of us to defy it or seek to change it except by the very constitutional means it contains. My hope is that all of us can continue to serve America as free men dedicated to the principles that have made our Country great. I have great pride in America who offers more things to more of its people than does any other nation in the world. No other nation in the world can equal ours for individual liberty and personal opportunity or for the abundance of good things that make life-even for our humblest citizens-the envy of most human beings throughout the world. So no matter how hard the radical liberal LEFT tries to exploit our problems we've still got the winning combination. So with the Bicentennial Celebration-the two hundredth years of our existence as a Nation, let us dedicate our lives "to FREE AMERICA".

In my last paragraph I want to pay tribute to my wife Bee. I have always loved her very deeply and she has returned it with the same devotion only a good wife can. Also, to our daughter Gail for the inspiration she meant to me. Not that I loved her anymore than my other children but she came along after I had failed in my financial life and was part of the inspiration that helped me to come back. In my wife Bee, I had a person who was willing to work and make the sacrifices for our financial success. She is a very proud person and was beautiful when she was in the prime of her life, she has a wonderful personality. She is a good housekeeper and as a cook the best ever. She is a nice person to be around with a good sense of humor to the point of being comical and always met me more than half way in any desires I had. I appreciated her council and when she differed with me which wasn't too often, she was generally right. As I look back over our married life one thing stands out to me and that is she was for me, always, and that coupled with all the things I have just mentioned is the reason our marriage has been so successful. No man can claim all the glory and credit for their success when he has a good wife by his side. I believe in the old saying that behind every successful man there is a woman.

Below is a poem that appeared on a valentine that I received from her several years ago which shows the sentimental feeling that she has for me.

ALL MY LOVE SWEETHEART ON VALENTINES DAY

When I think about you Sweetheart  
(and you know how much I do)  
I think about the special dreams  
You've helped to make come true.

I remember all the fun we've had  
the thoughtfulness you've shown  
and that I know is the reason why  
my heart belongs to you alone.